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ENGAGING GENERATION Z THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Case: Hurja Media Oy

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<p>Abstract</p> <p>Generation Z with their ever-emerging power as a consumer segment is rapidly becoming the focus of many organisations nowadays. For this reason, the core objective of this thesis was to provide effective solutions for creating a successful social media marketing strategy in order to engage the youngest generation of consumers. The commissioning party of this thesis, Hurja Media Oy, is a social media agency that assists companies in the development of successful social media marketing, branding, content creation and social channels administration. Hurja Media was involved in the process of completing this thesis with the purpose of utilising the acquired data for their future business activities.</p> <p>The thesis was based on the broad theoretical framework that covered two of the most crucial aspects of the given research: Generation Z and social media marketing. The theoretical part of this thesis was developed with the use of scientific literature as well as various digital sources relevant to the key concepts of the study.</p> <p>In addition to that, the practical part consisted of both quantitative and qualitative research methods and included a strategic analysis, a survey for Generation Z representatives and interviews with three Generation Z members. Therefore, the primary and secondary data were gathered and examined for the purpose of gaining a broad knowledge and understanding of the key ideas of this study.</p> <p>Finally, the acquired data was evaluated, examined and based on the findings, detailed conclusions were drawn, and most importantly, the initial objectives were reached and consequently, stated research questions were answered as well. As a result of this thesis, Hurja Media was provided with extensive data on the personality characteristics of Generation Z, their consumer behaviour as well as information about the current social media trends among them. A number of effective solutions on how to engage Generation Z through the social media marketing was provided in this thesis as well. Moreover, a significant contribution of this work was an e-booklet created by the author for the use of Hurja Media as a tutorial for creating a successful social media marketing strategy for Generation Z.</p>		
Keywords		
Generation Z, social media marketing, digital marketing, consumer behaviour		

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1 INTRODUCTION

As the millennials are getting older, Generation Z population is growing and just as businesses and marketing experts started to understand the millennial behaviour, a more paradoxical group is entering the global marketplace. Generation Z, the population segment born in 2001 or later (Reeves & Oh, 2008, 297), is the first generation to be “born digital”. They are known as the most digital savvy generation that is transforming the world towards a digitalisation and challenging the traditional ways of doing things. Undoubtedly, the mentality of Generation Z plays a crucially important role in today’s business world. Authenticity, diversity, open-mindedness, social responsibility and sustainability have become the core values for Generation Z. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46-61) This search for meaning drives organisations to look beyond the traditional practices and work on delivering something valuable that would resonate with the newest generation of consumers.

During the most rapid period of the technological transformation, in which the social media plays a substantial role in every aspect of business, Generation Z is changing the marketing world and shaping its future in a way in which no generation has before. Being surrounded by the endless technical opportunities since their upbringing, the members of Generation Z grew up using the Internet, which made the social media a powerful marketing tool and an important factor influencing their buying behaviour.

Understanding the behavioural patterns of Generation Z, who will reach approximately 40% of all consumers by the year 2020 (Finch, 2015), is relevant to any organisation in the long run. The commissioning party of this bachelor’s thesis is a company called *Hurja Media Oy*, a Finnish media company located in Helsinki and Tampere, Finland. Hurja Media is a B2B company that consults and coaches B2C companies regarding the social media content, design, channel administration, and their overall social media marketing strategy. The company consists of five social media professionals who are excited about the world of marketing and its digital future. This thesis is written in order to help the company understand the newest generation of consumers and successfully develop effective social media marketing strategies for their B2C clients.

The digital era has transformed how people live, consume information and make decisions. For this reason, it is crucially important for organisations to adopt modern marketing strategies in order to deliver valuable products and services for the next generation people. Therefore, the main *aim* of this thesis is to provide Hurja Media with effective social media marketing solutions for engaging Generation Z, creating relevant content, using appropriate social media channels, and making social media marketing successful and attractive for the members of Generation Z. The research is focused on the B2C context of Hurja Media's business activities.

In order to accomplish the main aim of this thesis, there are three main objectives emphasised:

- *Gain an understanding of Generation Z characteristics and consumer behaviour*
- *Determine the current and upcoming social media marketing trends among Generation Z*
- *Provide Hurja Media with effective solutions to successful social media marketing for Generation Z*

To achieve the stated goals, the following research questions were developed in accordance with the main aim and research objectives:

RQ1: What are the personality traits of Generation Z?

RQ2: What is the consumer behaviour of Generation Z?

RQ3: How does Generation Z transform the social media marketing?

RQ4: How to effectively engage Generation Z?

As an outcome of this thesis, the commissioning party is provided with effective social media marketing solutions for the newest generation of consumers. Additionally, a significant addition to this thesis is an e-booklet for Hurja Media's

use as a tutorial as far as the social media marketing for Generation Z is concerned. The link to the booklet is presented in Appendix 5.

The structure of this thesis consists of six major parts: introduction, theoretical framework, commissioning party presentation, methodology, results and conclusions. The theoretical framework is divided into two parts: Generation Z and social media marketing. The first part is dedicated to understanding Generation Z, its personality characteristics and traits, consumer behaviour, and it includes Generation Z customer profile as well. The second part covers the topics of the social media marketing, content marketing, social media channels and social media trends. The next part of the thesis introduces the case company with the help of information received during the interview with the company management and the theoretical framework as well. The methodological part of this thesis explains the chosen research methods, research design, data collection and data analysis. The research is divided into three parts: a strategic analysis, a survey for the Generation Z representatives and interviews with three Generation Z members. The design of each research method is explained in detail in this part and the process of a data collection and data analysis of each method conducted are covered as well. The next major part of this paper includes the results obtained through the primary and secondary data. Finally, conclusions are drawn, answers to the research questions are covered, and development suggestions for Hurja Media are proposed in the last part of this thesis. Additionally, the quality of the research and its limitations are described together with the future research possibilities in the seventh chapter of this thesis.

2 GENERATION Z

The first major part of this thesis concentrates on understanding Generation Z, its personality characteristics and consumer behaviour. Additionally, a customer profile based on the analysis of Generation Z is presented later in this chapter as well.

2.1 Defining Generation Z

The term *Generation Z* applies to individuals born after the generation of the millennials. There are many studies and theories concerning the birth years and the age of members of this generation and the most relevant data is presented in the next subchapter of this thesis.

One of the most significant characteristics of this generation is the fact that they were born “natives” in the modern digital world. (Greenfield, 2008) They have been surrounded by the world of technology since their first days and therefore, the ways they live, socialise, perceive information and make decisions completely differ from those of any other generation before.

A globalisation plays a crucially important role for Generation Z. The youth of today has no boundaries in the ways they think and act. As it has been mentioned in the report released by Sparks & Honey (2015, 46), Generation Z members are the most global and multicultural generation, which was born and raised in an era of an internationalism, gender equality and climate change awareness. Therefore, a social responsibility, social advocacy and their caring for the greater good play a very important role in the altruistic behaviour of Generation Z members, who are more aware of the global issues than all the previous generations and more determined to change the world for the better.

Even though Generation Y (millennials) are the most researched generation in the history (U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2012), the world is only beginning to study Generation Z and market researchers are just starting to analyse the youngest generation of consumers. It is crucial to understand that Generation Z greatly differs from its predecessors, both by their personality traits and consumer behaviour. For this reason, companies need to adopt to a brand new and entirely different consumer marketplace.

The importance of Generation Z studies can be justified by the data provided by the Sparks & Honey report (2015, 3), according to which Generation Z will account for 40% of the population by 2020 with US \$44 billion in buying power.

Undoubtedly, the importance of Generation Z and their influence in the nearest future is essential knowledge for any organisation willing to succeed in the long run.

There are several approaches to analysing a generational division. However, according to Reeves and Oh (2008, 296-297), a proper analysis of generations can be done using a division of five generations. Table 1 demonstrates various studies and theories concerning generational boundaries and differences in the given labels.

Table 1. Generational labels and dates reported in different sources (Reeves & Oh, 2008, 296-297)

Source		Labels			
Howe and Strauss (2000)	Silent Generation (1925-1943)	Boom Generation (1943-1960)	Generation 13 (1961-1981)	Millennial Generation (1982-2000)	-
Lancaster and Stillman (2002)	Traditionalists (1900-1945)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Generation Xers (1965-1980)	Millennial Generation; Echo Boomers; Generation Y; Baby Busters; Generation Next (1981-1999)	-
Martin and Tulgan (2002)	Silent Generation (1900-1942)	Baby Boomers (1946-1960)	Generation X (1965-1977)	Millennial (1978-2000)	-
Oblinger and Oblinger (2005)	The Mature (<1946)	Baby Boomers (1947-1964)	Gen-Xers (1965-1980)	Gen-Y; NetGen; Millennials (1981-1995)	Post-Millennials (1995-present)
Tapscott (1998)	-	Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1975)	Digital Generation (1976-2000)	-

[Continues]

[Continues]

<i>Zemke et al. (2000)</i>	Veterans (1922-1943)	Baby Boomers (1943-1960)	Gen-Xers (1960-1980)	Nexters (1980-1999)	-
<i>Reeves and Oh (2008)</i>	Mature Generation (1924-1945)	Boom Generation (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1980)	Millennial Generation (1981-2000)	Generation Z (2001-present)

As already mentioned, the scientific literature provides a great variety of Generation Z definitions and presents many theories concerning their time period. Thus, according to Oblinger and Oblinger (2005), the generation of “Post-Millennials” starts from the year 1995, while Reeves and Oh (2008, 297) mark the beginning of Generation Z with the year 2001. The classification defined by Reeves and Oh (2008, 297) is the primary time categorisation used in this thesis.

The studies about Generation Z started appearing in the beginning of the 2000s, when one of the generational research pioneers, Don Tapscott (1998, 1-2) defined Generation Z as “Generation Next” and characterised it as the most unique in a sense that no generation ever before was more comfortable, knowledgeable and educated with the technology and innovation. Additionally, his studies were completed by the research (2008) conducted with the help of 6000 Generation Z members from all over the world. According to it, Generation Z is all about speed, innovation, freedom and tolerance. Therefore, they are empowered to transform the modern life and improve the world of tomorrow.

According to Howe and Strauss (2009, 3-10), Generation Z is larger, more educated and more diverse than the previous ones. “Found Generation”, as they called it, is possibly the greatest generation which possesses special abilities, skills and mindset. However, there is a lot of controversy whether they are the most spoiled and unethical generation as well.

Zemke et al. (2000) provided useful information on differences between the generations in the workplace. Generation Z is described as an independent,

confident and the most educated generation. Moreover, they value diversity, feel comfortable with change, and desire flexibility.

Similarly, Lancaster and Stillman (2002) conducted a detailed research on the generational differences in the workplace. They highlighted the division between Generation Z that grew up in the digital era using technology from their early years and all the previous generations. They characterised the latest generation as realistic, confident, pragmatic in solving problems, and most importantly, open to diversity.

Martin and Tulgan (2002) also covered the topic of differences between various generations at work. In their research, they discovered the important characteristics of each generation and identified suitable strategies in order to fulfil the potential of each generation, and first and foremost, achieve the best organisational results thanks to the diverse skill set of each separate generation.

Oblinger and Oblinger (2005, 2.5-2.7) described “Net Generation” as digitally literate because of their unlimited access to technology, connected thanks to their technical opportunities, immediate because of the speed at which they process information, experiential in a way that they prefer learning by doing, and social thanks to their openness towards diversity, differences and desire to be socially connected.

Finally, Reeves and Oh (2008, 298-302) focused on the subject of the differences between generations. Thus, in addition to identifying the main generational distinctions, they also reviewed some of the latest studies and theories concerning various generations and the division between them.

2.1.1 Generational theories

In order to define Generation Z, it is important to understand what method was used for the generational division. Interestingly, the time categorisation is only one way to classify generations. (Reeves & Oh, 2008, 295) There is a common ideology that the birth years are not a sufficient ground for analysing the generational

differences, whereas a more complex analysis of the history, social factors and individual characteristics needs to be taken into consideration while examining the various generation types. There are several scientific theories and approaches on how to distinguish different generations.

One of the first approaches was proposed by Karl Mannheim (1952, 179-190), who stated that a generation type is defined by the series of socio-historical situations and memorable events at the time of this generation. According to Mannheim, an important factor is the age of the generation as well. Thus, a notable and distinctive socio-historical environment must occur when individuals are young. In other words, a situation or an event has to affect these people in a way that this experience will shape their future lives and therefore, associate these individuals with the era of this memorable setting.

Another research that proves insufficiency of the age boundaries during the generational analysis was made by Smith and Churman. (1997) They highlighted the importance of a place and culture that certain groups of people belong to. According to them, these similar experiences shared by people associated with a certain place or time have a big influence on the future lives of individuals and affect their choices, behaviours, values, lifestyles and obviously, generational characteristics as well. As stated in their research, in order to understand the behaviour of generations and analyse them, it is sufficient to identify a few factor groups. They are: *individual situation, environmental influences and cohort experiences*. The individual situation determines personal characteristics of an individual, a social status, economic situation and moreover, physical condition as well. The environmental influences include the outside circumstances affecting the individual's attitudes, opinions and points of view. Finally, the cohort experiences describe the common experiences of generations that influence the members of these generations and shape their lives. Thus, depending on these factors, it is possible to divide individuals into specific generational boundaries.

One of the most famous researches, arguing that defining generations only by their birth years is a rather limited approach was made by Howe and Strauss. (1991,

64) According to them, there are three criteria that can define generations more properly than the years of birth:

- *perceived membership*: awareness of being part of a group, which starts in adolescence and develops during adulthood
- *common beliefs and behaviours*: existing attitudes, beliefs and behavioural norms that characterize a generation
- *shared history*: historically significant events and important happenings that occurred during the times of generation members' adolescence and early adulthood, which influenced their future lives

A great number of studies has demonstrated the importance of a generational cohort in the generational classification and overall analysis. Thus, the significance of the common experiences, situations and behaviours that interconnect generations was highlighted by Schewe and Noble. (2000, 129-142) It is stated that different generations have different cohort experiences, which must be analysed in order to recognize the various generational types. Additionally, it is also mentioned that the common experiences can be of different nature: socio-historical events, political and economic situations or famous innovations and an influence of certain trends as well.

Lancaster and Stillman (2002) highlighted the importance of the generational differences at work. They focused on the qualitative data on how the generations differ by their behaviours at the workplace. Thus, personal traits, values, behaviours, culture, work ethics, leadership style, view of authority and many other behavioural forms provide a broader understanding of the generational differences compared to their birth years. Additionally, they mentioned the importance of the generational analysis and its direct link with the organisational success.

Similar research was made by Hammill. (2005) According to it, the basis of the generational division is the analysis of core values, personality characteristics and traits, workplace behaviour, work ethics, communication style, leadership skills and other behavioural patterns, which correspond with the specific generation types.

However, it is important to remember that these characteristics are generalised, and a proper generational analysis requires a personalised research.

The role of political, social, economic and cultural events in shaping generational differences and creating generational division was researched by Schwartz et al. (2010). The geographical factors are mentioned in their research and their influence on the generational development is highlighted as well. Thus, depending on the birthplace, they have divided the generations according to the significant events that had a strong influence on the future lives of the specific generation members. Some of the most memorable global events and the generational division that has been developed as a consequence are illustrated in Figure 1.

	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000
China		Post-50s generation (1950-1959)	Post-60s generation (1960-1969)	Post-70s generation (1970-1979)	Post-80s generation (1980-1989)	Post-90s generation (1990-1999)
India	"Traditional" generation (1948-1968)			"Non-Traditional" generation (1969-1980)	Gen Y (1981-onward)	
South Korea		"475" generation (1950-1959)	"386" generation (1960-1969)	Gen X and Gen Y (1970-onward)		
Japan	1st Baby Boomer (1946-1950)	Danso generation (1951-1960)	Shinjinrui generation (1961-1970)	2nd Baby Boomer (1971-1975)	Post Bubble (1976-1987)	Shinjinrui Junior (1986-1995) Yutori (1987-2002)
Russia	Baby Boomers (1943-1964)		Gen X (1965-1983)		Gen Y (Gen "Pu") (1983-2000)	
Bulgaria	Post War generation (1945-1965)		Communist generation (1965-1980)		Democracy generation (1980-onward)	
Czech Republic	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)		Generation X-"Husak's Children generation" (1965-1982)		Generation Y (1983-2000)	
South Africa	Baby Boomers (1943-1970)			Gen X (1970-1989)		Gen Y (1990-2000+)
Brazil	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)		Gen X (1965-1980)		Gen Y (1981-2001)	
U.S.	Baby Boomers (1943-1964)		Gen X (1965-1980)		Gen Y (1981-2001)	

Figure 1. Global generation overview (Schwartz et al., 2010)

McCrindle and Wolfinger (2010, 1-3) defined generations as the groups of people born in the same period of history. For this reason, they were influenced by the common experiences and have been similarly affected by the same technology

and history. Therefore, they emphasised the importance of the sociological analysis of generation division.

Finally, the influence of the cohort experiences on the generational categorisation is mentioned in the research by Törőcsik (2011) as well. It is mentioned that a deeper understanding of the concept of generations requires analysing the common experiences, shared culture, world events, public heroes and enemies, technology and other factors that create a cohort and have a strong influence on the members of this generation.

This thesis focuses on the generational division based on both, the time period and the cohort analysis. Additionally, some personalised factors and characteristics are taken into consideration as well.

2.1.2 Terminology

A proper generational analysis requires understanding the origin of the generational terminology. The scientific literature provides a great variety of definitions for Generation Z. Some of the most common terms used in the popular generational studies are:

- *Post-Millennials* (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005)
- *Digital Natives* (Prensky, 2001)
- *Net Generation* (Oblinger & Oblinger, 2005)
- *Generation Next* (Tapscott, 1998)
- *The Centennials* (Kantar Futures, 2016)

Additionally, some sources define Generation Z as *Gen Z*, *iGeneration*, *Gen Tech*, *Neo-Digital Natives*, *Switchers*, *Instant Online Group*, *Facebook Generation*, *Homeland Generation*, *Plurals*, *C (Connection)*, *D (Digital)* and *R (Responsibility) Generation* as well.

The main term used in this thesis to describe the youngest generation of consumers is *Generation Z*, whereas the above-mentioned terminology was used for analysing the generational characteristics and traits.

2.2 Analysing Generation Z

According to the great number of generational theories, individuals can be characterized and divided into the groups depending on the common patterns of thoughts, opinions, actions, behaviours and traits. Hence, Generation Z members share certain personality characteristics that help to understand their behaviour and therefore, approach them in the most effective and successful way.

There are many different studies and theories regarding the analysis of personality characteristics and traits. The essential difference between them is the way of viewing personality. (Wiggins, 1996, 51) Thus, some scientific sources state that the personality is shaped under the influence of the internal factors and encounters. (Eysenck, 1950) For example, according to the Big Five personality theory by Eysenck, there are five core traits and the interconnection between them shapes the personality of an individual. The five-figure model is demonstrated in Figure 2.

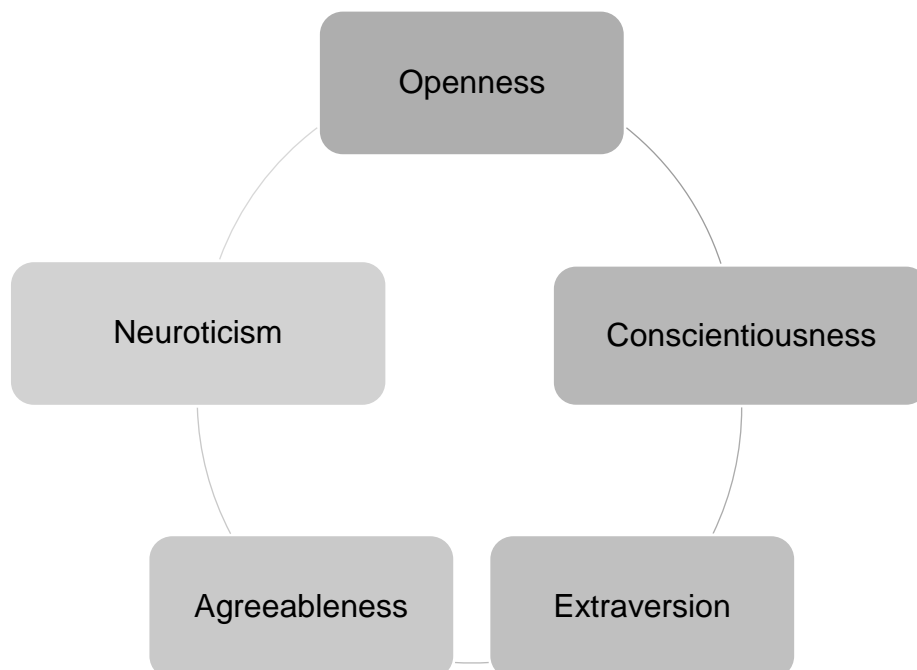


Figure 2. Big Five personality traits (Eysenck, 1950)

However, other sources argue that the external factors greatly affect an individual's personality and consequently, a personality is developed as a result of interactions between an individual and the environment. (Ryder, 2014, 50-62) Some of the most crucial external factors are depicted in Figure 3.

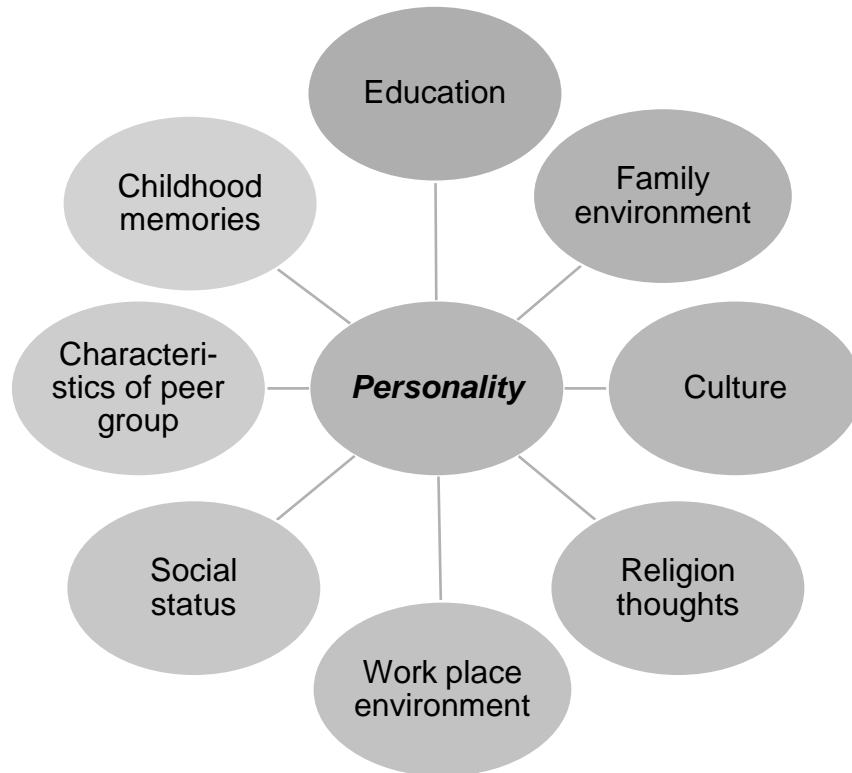


Figure 3. Factors affecting personality development (Bank of Info, 2013)

The next subchapters are dedicated to understanding the general characteristics and traits of Generation Z. Mainly, the internal factors influencing their personality characteristics are analysed. However, the external factors that have affected the development of the personality traits of Generation Z are taken into consideration as well.

2.2.1 Personality traits

Being born during the times of radical changes in technology, a cultural diversity and climate change, Generation Z members possess the special characteristics that not just represent the future, but instead, create it and shape it in a unique and extraordinary way.

Global

Generation Z is the first truly global generation. To start with, a globalisation appears in the way they think. Generation Z knows no limits in accessing the information or connecting with people. For them, the geographical borders are not an obstacle anymore as almost everything can be found online and connecting with people from all over the world can be done within seconds. A globalisation erases borders between people of different backgrounds as well. Thus, according to Sparks & Honey (2015, 46), Generation Z members have the freedom to try various personas, sample a range of interests, join different communities and expand their horizons.

Generation Z is affected by the same impacts and interconnected on the web. (McCrindle & Wolfinger, 2010, 105) Thus, not only the globally known movies, music and celebrities connect this generation, but also the various trends, Internet influencers, fashion, food, places and even their language and specific words and expressions interconnect them across various social networks through the technology and globalisation.

Finally, a diversity plays a crucially important role in the aspect of globalisation. Generation Z is growing up in a very non-traditional social structure. In their perspective, there is no right or wrong, normal or abnormal. It is obvious to them that people come from different social and economic backgrounds, races, ethnicities and nationalities. They embrace the world full of people of different gender identities and sexual orientations. Additionally, accepting the incredibly diverse world is not about a tolerance, but instead, a way of thinking. Hence, tolerating implies the understanding that there are “other” or “different” people, which in the opinion of Generation Z, is not the case as a diversity is the norm in their global world. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 59)

Technological

One of the main differences between the millennials and Generation Z is that despite the big role of technology in the life of the former, they still remember the time without any devices and the Internet access. Oppositely, Generation Z is the first generation to be surrounded by the world of technology since their first days. As mentioned by Sparks & Honey (2015, 30), being connected for the true generation of digital natives is as natural as moving an arm or a leg. Technology is integrated into almost all areas of their lives and using it on a daily basis has been the norm since their youngest age. When 92% of Generation Z members go online daily and 24% are online “almost constantly”, technology is an inseparable part of their lives. (Lenhart, 2015)

Generation Z is used to seeing the world through multiple screens. There are typically at least five monitors in their homes: television, desktop, laptop, tablet and smartphone. A speed plays a crucially important role in the life of Generation Z as well. With the extensive use of technology, they are accustomed to getting the desired information and results within seconds. Thus, connectivity is vital for them and any delays make them impatient and irritated. Another big difference between Generation Z and the millennials is their behaviour online. Generation Z is very concerned with the Internet privacy and knowing the possibilities of today's technology and the easiness of the information access, they are very careful with the information they share online. (Vision Critical, 2016, 11)

Socially responsible

A social advocacy and caring for the greater good is one of the most important and unique characteristics of Generation Z. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 51) They are truly passionate about making a positive impact and contributing to something good. A good example of their care for today's world and its future could be the fact that the amount of alcohol and drugs consumed by Generation Z members is by far the lowest and the level of political engagement is the highest. (Barr, 2016)

Human rights, equality, diversity, freedom and justice are the norms for Generation Z and the issues they deeply care about. In fact, it is all about the message and the meaning today and Generation Z is ready to oppose everything that does not resonate with their social passions.

Innovative

Thanks to the number of technical opportunities surrounding Generation Z, an innovativeness is one of the key characteristics of this generation. They are early adopters and trendsetters, who are not afraid to substitute the traditional ways of doing things by the new, creative and innovative technologies. As mentioned in the report by Vision Critical (2016, 10), they are creating the future of networked gadgets, artificial intelligence and job automation. In addition to that, they are the most entrepreneurial-minded generation. 70% of teens today are self-employed and have the entrepreneurial jobs such as, for example, selling on eBay or teaching piano lessons. This gives them a valuable working experience and prepares them to become tomorrow's innovators. (Johnson, 2015) According to Sparks & Honey (2015, 5), being born in an unstable world, Generation Z members are following non-linear education and work paths.

Social

Generation Z is more connected than any other generation before. Being the most global generation, their network online is broader numerically, geographically and accessible all the time. (McCrindle, 2012)

Today's youth is very interested in following each other's lives online and the Internet personalities across various social platforms are at the peak of their popularity. Thus, according to Sparks & Honey report (2015, 78), Generation Z members are present on a great number of Internet platforms and 71% state that they are on more than one. Additionally, 57% of today's teens have found a new friend on the Internet. (Lenhart, 2015)

Realistic

In addition to being more cautious online, Generation Z is more realistic than the millennials as well. A global recession, political uncertainty and most importantly, the lessons learnt from the previous generation, who was brought up as optimists believing in boundless opportunities, Generation Z is more conservative and practical. (Jenkins, 2017) Undoubtedly, these events made them more cautious and concerned about security, but also inspired them to work on improving the world of tomorrow. (Forbes, 2013)

Generation Z is more likely to save money for the future. Today, 58% of teens are already saving money. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 7) They seek stability and security in their finances. (Claveria, 2017) In addition to being financially cautious, they are very careful in choosing the products and services they pay for as well. As a result, all-natural, organic and vegan products are popular than ever before because Generation Z tends to make the conscious choices in their purchases.

Additionally, Generation Z is realistic in a sense that they seek and value an authenticity. For instance, 63% of Generation Z members prefer seeing more of the realistic narrative and social media influences, whereas only 37% choose the traditional celebrities. (Deep Focus, 2015) Generation Z wishes the world to be real, non-stereotypical and unique.

Educated

Finally, Generation Z has an unlimited online access to the great variety of learning resources for the self-education. Their non-traditional approach towards education can be demonstrated by the data from Sparks & Honey (2015, 8), according to which 75% of teens are convinced that there are ways to get a good education without attending college.

Nevertheless, Generation Z members are still willing to get educated and most of them are interested in learning the ways to establish and run their own business.

Learning opportunities are everywhere on the web and Generation Z has no obstacles on their ways to learning. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 8)

2.2.2 Core values

Although the technology plays a crucially important role in almost every aspect of Generation Z lives, today's youth values and cares about many other topics as well. In fact, Generation Z is considered as being more developed socially, educationally and even has the potential to become the smartest generation to have lived. (Folmsbee, 2017)

Community

The concept of "Me is we" is highlighted in the report by Sparks & Honey. Thus, connecting with people, sharing your life online and following others' create a sense of belonging and a feeling of being a greater whole, which is one of the core values of Generation Z. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46)

Additionally, not only they see online communities as groups of the like-minded individuals, but also as a powerful tool to create change. This Generation knows their possibilities online and therefore, wants to be a part of something big and meaningful that resonates with their views. (Cone Communications, 2017, 14)

Innovation

Generation Z was born and raised during the period of a digital revolution. As a result, an innovation is the natural environment for today's youth. (Beswick, 2014, 10) According to the research made by Ofcom (2014), 6-year-old kids have the same digital skills as 45-year-old adults, whereas 14 and 15-year-olds are far in front of understanding digital communications and technology. Obviously, an innovation does not wait and Generation Z values the world, where their expectations for the better, faster, more creative and more innovative are met.

Speed

It takes only 8 seconds to catch the attention of Generation Z. (Finch, 2015) Being surrounded by the endless opportunities online, they value their time. Not knowing the world without the high-speed connectivity, it is all about a faster Internet connection and instant messages. As mentioned in the report by Vision Critical (2016, 11), Generation Z prefers and expects a connectivity, whereas the world that lags behind makes them irritated and impatient.

Sustainability

92% of Generation Z members are concerned about social and environmental issues and 89% are worried about the future of the planet. (Cone Communications, 2017, 2) They are extremely empathetic and passionate about making a positive change in the world. (Brown et al., 2015)

According to the research made by Cone Communications (2017, 10), at the top of social issues Generation Z is concerned about, are a poverty, hunger, environment, human rights and health. Therefore, sustainability is one of the core values of today's generation and caring for the greater good is at the top of their personality characteristics. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 51)

Authenticity

Generation Z values everything individualistic, personal, authentic, real and relatable. (Mediakix, 2017) They were raised to value an authenticity and uniqueness. (Folmsbee, 2017)

With the extensive use of the Internet, where individuals have the ability to create multiple digital personas and try different roles, Generation Z cares about being authentic and real. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 54)

Diversity

Diversity is the norm for Generation Z. They are the least racist, sexist and homophobic generation compared to the previous ones. (Folmsbee, 2017) As a result, they value and respect people of the variety of backgrounds.

Among the most relevant social issues for Generation Z are a racial equality, women's rights, immigration and LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender) rights. (Cone Communications, 2017, 12) Therefore, today's youth values and supports the diversity of all kinds: gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, religion and sexual orientation.

Freedom

One of the fundamental values of Generation Z is freedom. Even though political, social and racial freedoms are valued by today's generation, these freedoms have already been fought for by previous generations and today's youth grew up in the world, where the above-mentioned issues are the norms. However, the freedoms they aspire to are about being a true self, having a geographical and financial flexibility and most importantly, the freedom to create the world they desire to live in. (Hughes, 2017)

Being themselves is vital for them as in their opinion, everyone has the right to be real and unique. They understand that people are different, and they accept everyone the way they are. A geographical freedom is valuable for them as today's generation is not attached to any physical places anymore when their work can be done having only the Internet access and an apartment can be rented anywhere in the world in just one click. They seek new opportunities and are ready to move wherever they find them. Finally, being the most entrepreneurial-minded generation, Z members constantly create new ways of making money. (Hughes, 2017) They value being independent and the only way they can achieve it is through the financial freedom. Generation Z is passionate about their social

freedoms and rights and fighting for them in order to make the world a better place is their core value.

2.3 Consumer behaviour

As already mentioned, Generation Z members are expected to account for 40% of all consumers by the year 2020. (Finch, 2015) As a result, today's youth represents an emerging consumer powerhouse. Understanding the potential of Generation Z and its perspective is vital for the success of any organisation. (Perlstein, 2017)

Even though the majority of Generation Z members does not live independently yet and their average money allowance is not more than US \$20 per week in average, in a few years this generation will be estimated at 40% of the consumer base. (Pickard, 2017) Additionally, according to the recent Cassandra Report by the digital agency Deep Focus (2015), 93% of Generation Z members' parents highlight the influence of their children on the family purchase decision-making.

Undoubtedly, the consumer behaviour of Generation Z is a crucially important knowledge for any business and adopting the marketing strategy for the generation that is already beginning to dominate the market is a key to success in the long run. Thus, a consumer behaviour is the complex process that individuals go through when making a purchase. It starts with the moment of selecting specific goods or services, their acquisition and finally, consumption. There are different stages involved before a consumer makes a final decision to purchase a certain product or service. Firstly, an individual realizes that he/she has a need for something. This need triggers his/her buying behaviour and starts the process of decision-making. Secondly, a consumer gathers information on the desired product or service after which he/she looks for available alternatives and evaluates them trying to choose the best option. Next, a consumer finally decides to purchase the desired item and completes the last step of the decision-making process – post-purchase evaluation. The last step refers to an individual's satisfaction and overall analysis of whether the purchase met his/her expectations and fulfilled his/her needs. (Kotler et al., 2005, 276-289)

Meanwhile, there is a number of factors affecting a consumer behaviour. As demonstrated in Figure 4, they are: *psychological, personal, social and cultural characteristics*. (Kotler et al., 2005, 256)

<i>Cultural</i>	<i>Social</i>	<i>Personal</i>	<i>Psychological</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Culture • Subculture • Social class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reference groups • Family • Roles and status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age and life-cycle stage • Occupation • Economic circumstances • Lifestyle • Personality and self-concept 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motivation • Perception • Learning • Beliefs and attitudes

Figure 4. Characteristics affection consumer behaviour (Kotler et al., 2005, 256)

The next subchapters will discuss the consumer behaviour of Generation Z and how each of the above-mentioned characteristics influences their decision-making process.

2.3.1 Cultural characteristics

To start with, the cultural characteristics are the biggest influencers on a consumer behaviour. Cultural factors include the concepts of *culture, subculture and social class* as well. (Kotler et al., 2005, 256-259) Firstly, a culture is a set of values, beliefs, perceptions and behaviours that are shared by a certain group of people, acquired through various social institutions and transmitted in the course of generations. A subculture refers to groups of individuals within a larger culture that are characterised by the same demographic, national, ethnic or any other social background. Finally, a social class defines social divisions based on the similar social and economic status. (Kotler et al., 2005, 256-259)

Generation Z was called “Culture Changers” and “Culture Creators” who revolutionise today’s world with their own “Cultural Currency”, which is all about valuing uniqueness, authenticity and freedom. (Kleinschmit, 2015) Being born in

the world where social issues like the same-sex marriages, a gender equality and a climate change are accepted and perceived as essential constituents of the sustainable development, Generation Z members have acquired a progressive mindset and become the world's most global and polycultural generation. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46)

The consumer behaviour of this generation has had a major influence from the above-mentioned topics. Thus, today, it is much more than just choosing a certain product or service. Instead, it is about supporting a meaning, creating a movement, provoking change, and standing for one's own values. One of the most important criteria for choosing a brand is the affinity to its personality. Generation Z values powerful brand messages that they resonate with and prioritise emotional reasoning behind the purchase decision. As a result, 57% of Generation Z members admitted that brands helped them to reflect their personalities and represent their values. (Sensis & ThinkNow Research, 2016)

As they were called in the report by Sparks & Honey (2015, 46), "Generation We" is united by the same cultural beliefs and values, and consequently, by giving their preference to the specific brands, Generation Z supports the community of like-minded individuals and becomes a part of the greater whole. Thus, in order to engage the newest generation of consumers, businesses need to focus on creating an appealing brand personality that would resonate with the cultural values of Generation Z. Undoubtedly, understanding today's generation is one of the key strategies for a business success as Generation Z is much more than the bare statistics and facts. Instead, it is about diverse a culture with strong values, norms and beliefs.

2.3.2 Social characteristics

According to Armstrong (2009, 144-186), a number of social factors strongly affect the consumer behaviour of an individual through exposing a person to new behaviours and lifestyles influencing the person's attitude towards a specific product and brand choices. Social factors refer to *reference groups, families, roles and status* influencing a consumer's behaviour and are formed through the

interaction of an individual with a variety of social groups. (Kotler et al., 2005, 259-262)

Social groups vary depending on the regularity and formality of interaction: membership groups include primary (family, friends, co-workers) and secondary groups (clubs, unions, associations) and reference groups that involve aspirational groups (desired groups of people that an individual does not belong to but wishes to be a part of). Each social group has its own opinion leaders who have the strongest influence on the rest of the group, thanks to the special skills and knowledge they possess. Families, undoubtedly, have a strong influence on the decision-making process of an individual as well. Being the most powerful social institute, it influences an individual's values, beliefs, attitudes and obviously, buying behaviour from the early age by giving a person an orientation towards the biggest social issues and most importantly, the own conception of life. As for the roles and status, belonging to various social groups, individuals play different roles in influencing a buying behaviour. Thus, some of the most common consumer's buying roles are: initiator (suggesting an idea for the first time), influencer (influencing the buying decision), decider (making the decision to buy a certain product or service), buyer (making a purchase), and user (final consumer). (Kotler et al., 2005, 259-262)

Generation Z is the most global generation ever lived and as a result, a community is one of the core values for them. They want to share, collaborate, engage and be a part of the greater whole. Undoubtedly, a family is a crucially important social factor for Generation Z. Generally, their relationships with their families are much closer compared to the older generations. 58% of Generation Z members have called their parents "best friends". (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 49) As a consequence, a family plays a huge role as an influencer on the buying behaviour of today's youth. However, social groups have an even greater influence on Z Generation. With the extensive Internet and social media usage, Generation Z members have a chance to follow the lives of their opinion leaders (online influencers and celebrities). By observing the information on where they shop, what they buy, what kind of food they eat, and where they travel, they subconsciously get affected by

their leaders' behaviours and attitudes, which consequently influences their consumer behaviour.

In addition to the opinion leaders, Generation Z members value the opinions of their peers as well. Thus, before making a purchase, they tend to search for information on a certain product or service on the web, and read the feedback online. The opinions of others are very important for Generation Z as being approved by their peers, fitting in their communities, and being a part of something bigger is one of the values of Generation Z. Additionally, sharing the post-purchase experience is very common among today's youth as well. Giving reviews, rating things and recommending a product or service as well as criticizing something is as important for them as gathering information before making purchase decisions.

However, it is crucially important to mention the value of uniqueness for Generation Z. Although following trends is important for them, Generation Z is less likely to make a purchase-related decision based on the brand name or its popularity. They are much more interested in creating a personal and unique style which not only demonstrates their taste or social status, but also characterizes their values and amplifies their authentic personalities. (Vision Critical, 2016, 34) As a result, brands willing to engage with the newest generation of consumers cannot underestimate the importance of social communities and their power as well as developing unique brand personality that would resonate with the like-minded individuals.

2.3.3 Personal characteristics

Personal factors also influence an individual's purchasing behaviour. Some of the most important personal characteristics are: *age and lifecycle stage, occupation, economic circumstances, lifestyle and personality*. (Kotler et al., 2005, 262-268)

It is generally known that people experience different changes in their tastes and perceptions with the change of age. Additionally, individuals go through several lifecycle stages throughout their lives, which, undoubtedly, influences their consumer decisions as well. Occupation affects the buying behaviour as people of certain occupational groups tend to make similar choices concerning the goods

and services they purchase. Economic circumstances refer to an individual's economic situation and therefore, depending on a person's income, savings and other economic indicators, certain purchase decisions are made. Lifestyle relates to a person's set of behaviours, activities, interests and ways of living, which help to understand various values of consumers and how they affect their buying behaviours. Finally, personality defines a distinctive and unique set of psychological characteristics that directly influence an individual's buying behaviour and purchase decisions, whereas self-concept is the self-image of a consumer. (Kotler et al., 2005, 262-268)

Undoubtedly, technology has played a big role in the development of the consumer behaviour of Generation Z. Using technology from their childhood, they expect connectivity in everything they do and there is no doubt that these preferences have a big influence on their consumer behaviour or, to make matters worse, the future of consumer products and services. (Vision Critical, 2016, 11)

The impact of technology on their lifestyle has transformed the buying behaviour of Generation Z and the way they make purchases in general. Today, it is all about online shopping, instant service and 24/7 accessibility. According to the research by Vision Critical (2016, 34), 63% of Generation Z member prefer making purchases online because of the time efficiency, while 53% highlighted the variety of options online. Therefore, the biggest challenge for brands is to accept the culture of Generation Z and rethink their strategies in order to meet the customer expectations of the newest generation of consumers.

The influence of personal factors on the consumer behaviour of Generation Z can also be demonstrated through their attitudes and selection criteria towards the purchases they make. The report by Vision Critical (2016, 36), demonstrates that 91% of Z members prioritise functionality of the product or service, 90% highlight the importance of high quality, whereas 70% value if the purchase aligns with their beliefs.

Generation Z is known as the most practical generation as well. Thus, it is very unlikely that they would prioritise any brand names over the quality and practicality of a product or service they are paying for. Being known as the most financially savvy generation as well, Generation Z is also less likely to overpay for luxury brands and designs for the sake of impressing others. (Vision Critical, 2016, 33-34) Therefore, understanding the consumer behaviour of Generation Z, which is very different from that of any other generation before thanks to their unique personal characteristics, is substantial for any company willing to connect with Generation Z.

2.3.4 Psychological characteristics

Psychological factors strongly affect the individual's consumer behaviour as well. (Armstrong, 2009, 144-186) There are four important psychological characteristics influencing the buying behaviour of a person: *motivation, perception, learning, beliefs and attitudes*. (Kotler et al., 2005, 268-276)

To start with, a motivation defines the force that drives people to act in a certain way. Motivation arises when a person has some needs or urges that require satisfaction. These needs can be divided into two types: biological (food, water, sleep, comfort) and psychological (self-worth, self-esteem, meaning, purpose) needs. A good example of the variety of individual's needs is Abraham Maslow's theory, according to which individuals are motivated by the number of needs that vary depending on the level of importance. They are:

1. *Physiological needs*
2. *Safety needs*
3. *Social needs*
4. *Esteem needs*
5. *Cognitive needs*
6. *Aesthetic needs*
7. *Self-actualisation needs*

Obviously, the ways people select, organise, interpret and therefore, perceive information and various situations vary greatly for everyone. There are five senses that people perceive information through: sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch. However, it is important to keep in mind that each person has an individual way of perception, which, undoubtedly, strongly affects his/her behaviour. Learning defines changes in the behaviour of an individual caused by various experiences. As a result, good past experiences shape positive consumer behaviour, whereas negative ones obviously have the opposite impact on a customer satisfaction. Finally, beliefs and attitudes describe personal preferences of consumers. They are usually formed from the early age and influenced by various cultural, social and personal factors. Beliefs and attitudes formulate consumers' brand images that not only influence their opinions about specific products and services, but also their buying behaviour in general. (Kotler et al., 2005, 268-276)

Undoubtedly, the mindset of Generation Z, their motivations, values, beliefs and attitudes play a significantly important role in the development of their consumer behaviour. For instance, one of the core forces driving Generation Z is their desire to make a positive impact and change today's world. Thus, social responsibility is one of the key criteria for choosing specific brands, products or services. Today's youth prefers companies that are committed to environmentally friendly choices in their businesses by adopting sustainable policies and prioritising ethics and consciousness in all the products and services they produce. Additionally, Generation Z is passionate about social issues like human rights, gender equality, racial justice and therefore, companies that facilitate these values are going to be supported by the newest generation of consumers. (Vision Critical, 2016, 44)

As it has been discussed in the subchapter 2.2.2 *Core values*, Generation Z appreciates community, innovation, speed, authenticity, diversity and freedom. There is no doubt that their values play a significantly important role in the buying choices they make. Thus, businesses that are willing to engage with Generation Z must carefully analyse the psychological characteristics of today's youth, which are very different from the ones of their predecessors.

Finally, one of the key things that brands need to understand about the consumer behaviour of Generation Z is the importance of a meaning and a message. Hence, for Generation Z, paying for a specific product or service means a lot more than just acquiring them – it is about standing for the own social passions, supporting personal beliefs and values, and expressing freedom. For this reason, creating and defining a brand personality should be one of the biggest priorities of businesses willing to succeed as far as Generation Z is concerned.

2.4 Customer profile

A customer profile is a detailed description or analysis of the company's ideal buyer. It provides businesses with valuable information on where, when and how customers make purchase decisions in addition to a deeper analysis of an individual's personal characteristics and traits. (Chaffey et al., 2009, 470)

Figure 5 illustrates the customer profile of Generation Z. As it is demonstrated in the figure, all characteristics have been divided into four major parts: *demographics*, *psychographics* and *behaviour*. To start with, demographics provide a statistical information and socioeconomic characteristics of an individual. Some of them are: age, gender, education, occupation, income level, geographical location and other characteristics. Secondly, psychographics refers to the “why” concept of the buying behaviour of an individual. Thus, it covers psychological characteristics such as personality traits, interests, values and lifestyles. Finally, behavioural characteristics explain the ways customers behave when they make purchase decisions as well as various factors affecting their decisions. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001)

Generation Z customer profile

Demographics

- *Age years*: 2001 - present
- *Education*: primary and secondary education
- *Occupation*: students and part-time online entrepreneurs
- *Income*: parental income, irregular income and personal savings
- *Household*: living with parents

Psychographics

- *Interests*: technology (using social media, watching videos, blogging and gaming), social issues (human rights, equality and climate change), media and culture, health consciousness (the lowest consumption of drugs, alcohol and cigarettes, sustainable food choices, wearable technology), entrepreneurship
- *Values*: community, innovation, speed, sustainability, authenticity, diversity, freedom
- *Price-sensitive*
- *Prioritise quality and practicality*

Behaviour

- *Consumer behaviour influencers*: family and friends, online community, online influencers, celebrities
- *Information sources for buying decisions*: social media, websites, review sites
- *Buying patterns*: high street, online shopping
- *Most used devices*: smartphone, TV, laptop
- *Social media landscape*: YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat

Figure 5. Generation Z customer profile (made by author)

3 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING FOR GENERATION Z

The second major part of the theoretical framework of this thesis is focused on understanding the area of the social media marketing in relation to Generation Z. Undoubtedly, Generation Z is transforming the world of marketing and shaping it in a unique, innovative and progressive way. Today, the social media touches almost every aspect of people's lives. (Qualman, 2010) As a result, in the world where 81% of Generation Z members regularly use social media and more than half of their purchase decisions are made online (Hulyk, 2015), it is really important

for brands to adopt their marketing strategies by making social media an integral part of their business in order to meet the expectations of the newest generation of consumers.

According to the report produced by Google (2017, 21), Generation Z is the most informed and evolved generation. Hence, traditional marketing techniques that worked on previous generations are not relevant for Z members anymore. Consequently, companies need to focus on creating unique and engaging content that would resonate with today's youth.

The next subchapters cover the overview of two of the most important topics on the online marketing for Generation Z – social media marketing and content marketing. Additionally, relevant social media channels, as well as the current and upcoming social media trends among Generation Z, are discussed in this chapter as well.

3.1 Defining social media marketing

To start with, social media marketing is the process of utilising technology with the purpose of creating, communicating and delivering value to customers. (Tuten & Solomon, 2014) Undoubtedly, the social media marketing is just one component of the bigger area of the digital marketing. However, with the help of the online marketing channels, businesses are able to target individuals in a more personalised way in order to satisfy customer needs and deliver a customer value (Kotler, 2003) in addition to growing sales, strengthening brand loyalty and achieving other business objectives. (Wilson, 2010) The above-mentioned online marketing channels vary greatly by nature and type and will be discussed in the subchapter 3.3 *Social media channels*.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2015), one of the biggest strengths of the social media marketing is its possibilities. Thus, businesses have a chance to approach their customers at any time and from anywhere. Another important aspect of the social media marketing is its effectiveness despite the cost-efficiency. As it has been mentioned by Zarrella (2010, 3), despite the low cost, it has a great influence

on the overall business. Finally, with nearly 3 billion of social media users globally (Kemp, 2017), doing marketing on social media is the most effective and powerful way to succeed for businesses.

The core difference between the traditional marketing and the social media marketing is the type of promotional strategy. Hence, the traditional marketing, which focuses on a one-way communication with the target audience uses a push strategy (for instance, TV, radio, telemarketing, emails and print ads), whereas the social media marketing that values an active interaction with the customers supports a pull strategy (for example, social media, website SEO, blogs, affiliates and referrals) of promotion. (Tuten & Solomon, 2014)

It is important to mention the 4P's marketing mix whenever mentioning the marketing area of business. It is generally known that this marketing formula consists of four vital elements: product, price, place and promotion. The core idea behind the 4P's mix is to sell a specific product for the right price through the most efficient distribution channel using the most effective promotion. (Bennett, 1997, 151-156) However, as one of the most important concepts of the social media marketing is a communication with the customers (Hajli, 2015, 360), the 4C's model that was introduced by Lauterborn (1990, 26-28), has affected the traditional 4P's marketing mix in the modern era of the Internet. According to the 4C's formula, a product was substituted with a consumer value, a price with a cost, a place was replaced by a convenience and finally, a promotion by a communication. As a consequence, the ultimate goal of the 4C's marketing mix is to deliver a customer value. In order to achieve this goal, businesses need to focus on the price and convenience as with the use of the Internet, customers have a chance to search for various options and choose the most economical solution as well as make purchases regardless a location and time. Finally, a communication as the way to identify and respond to customer's needs is a crucial part of the 4C's marketing formula as well. Hence, the 4C's customer-oriented model works more effectively in today's world, where a customer is the core aspect of any social media marketing strategy. (Constantinides, 2006, 407-438) The comparison between two of the above-mentioned marketing models is demonstrated in Figure 6.

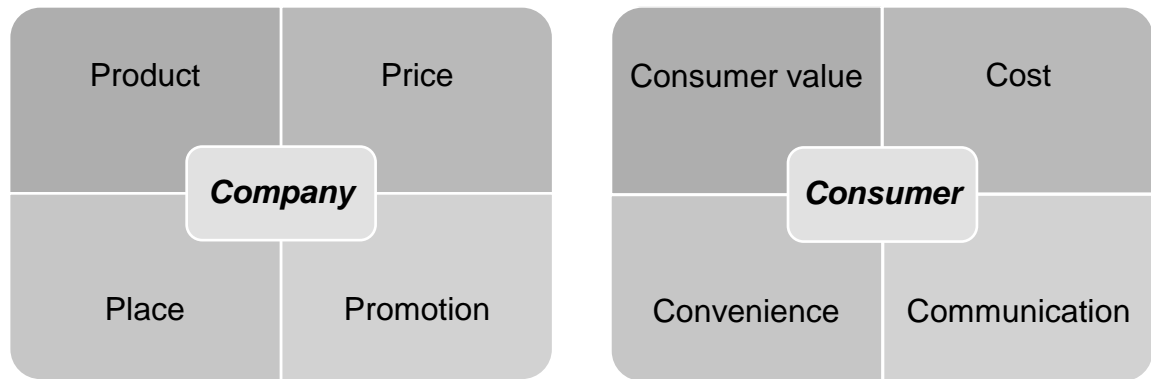


Figure 6. Marketing mix: the 4P's versus the 4C's (Kotler & Armstrong, 2014)

As illustrated in Figure 7, the process of the social media marketing includes four main steps: *attracting, engaging, converting and retaining*. To start with, attracting the right audience and therefore, a company's potential customers, is the primary goal of any marketing strategy. Social media marketing focuses on creating value to attract the ideal customers. Hence, creating a relevant content that customers need and want and finally, demonstrating them that their needs can be satisfied and accomplished with the help of the specific products or services offered by the given company. Secondly, engaging refers to building relationships with the customers and earning their trust. It is a crucially important step in the process of the social media marketing as with the great variety of products and services available on the Internet, businesses need to work hard on connecting with their audience in order to be chosen. Thirdly, converting relates to transforming the customers that a company managed to engage into a revenue. In other words, it refers to a company's sales process. The final step is about supporting the brand loyalty and maintaining a customer interest. It is important for businesses to think long-term and keep strengthening the relationships with their existing customers. (Shanfelt, 2010)

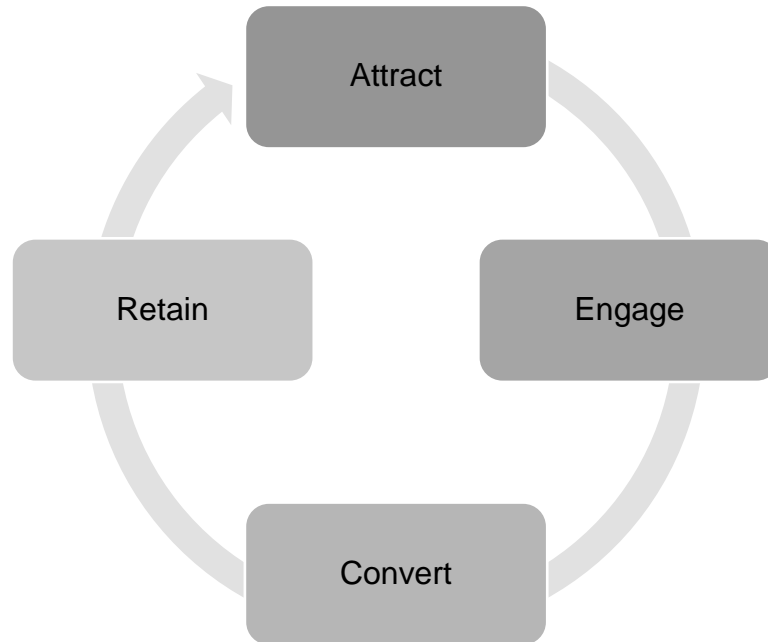


Figure 7. Social media marketing process (Shanfelt, 2010)

To summarise, as already mentioned, the social media marketing has already started replacing the traditional marketing and businesses that are willing to succeed in the next years must adopt their marketing strategies accordingly. To make matters worse, with over 80% of Generation Z being influenced by the social media in their buying behaviour (Salpini, 2017), the social media marketing is the most effective and successful way to engage with the youngest generation of consumers.

3.2 Defining content marketing

Although the social media marketing and the content marketing are two separate types of the marketing strategies, they are closely interconnected. Hence, both of these methods are focused on creating a valuable customer experience. (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)

Nevertheless, according to Hitz (2017), the content marketing is a tactic and strategy of the social media marketing to deliver a customer value through creating and distributing a relevant content that is aimed at generating interest of the target audience in the company's products and services. Additionally, the similar

definition has been mentioned by Rose and Pulizzi (2011), who have highlighted the importance of a valuable and engaging content, which is focused on helping customers discover a company's offerings. According to Lieb (2011, 56), in addition to the quality of a content, businesses should make it personalised for their target audience as well, because satisfying the needs of each customer segment is the core goal of the marketing strategy and without providing customers with the relevant to them content, companies will not be able to achieve effective results.

There are various types and ways of the content marketing. According to Lieb (2011, 61-97), some of the most common ones include social media, traditional media, e-newsletters, images, videos, blogs, websites, print material, virtual and in-person events and many other types. Based on the most recent report made by Content Marketing Institute and MarketingProfs (2017, 22), the most popular content marketing types used by organisations today are illustrated in Figure 8.

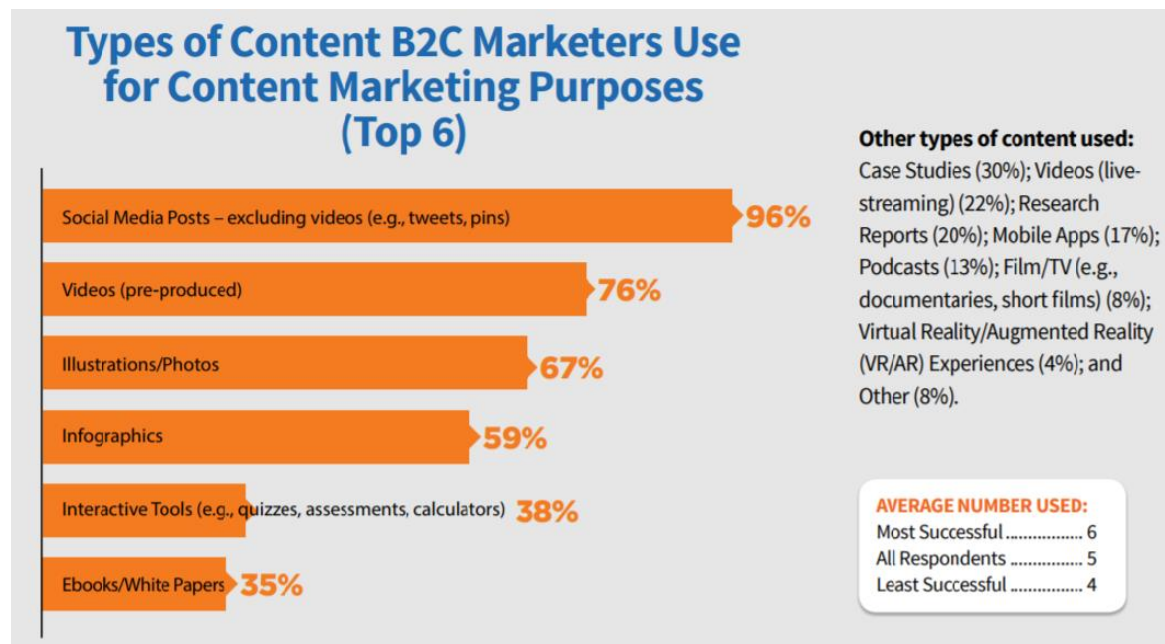


Figure 8. Types of content B2C marketers use for content marketing purposes (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2017, 22)

Out all the content marketing types demonstrated above, organisations were asked to choose the most and the least effective ones. As a result, the most successful ones were social media posts (59%), videos (43%) and images (37%). The least

successful ones were social media posts (68%), images (29%) and infographics (24%). (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2017, 22)

Additionally, the most common formats of the content marketing distribution used by organisations are demonstrated in Figure 9. Hence, the most successful formats to distribute a content chosen by organisations were email (74%), blogs (50%), social media platforms (50%) and in-person events (35%). Whereas the least successful ones were email (68%), social media platforms (45%) and blogs (37%). (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2017, 24)



Figure 9. Formats B2C marketers use to distribute content for content marketing purposes (Content Marketing Institute & MarketingProfs, 2017, 24)

As for the process of the content marketing, according to Rose and Pulizzi (2011), it consists of four main stages, which are shown in Figure 10. To start with, the key to any successful content marketing strategy is the content itself. In order to attract the right auditory, organisations need to focus on the quality of produced content and make it interesting, unique and engaging for their ideal customers. Secondly, in today's environment, not only a good content needs to be interesting and creative, but also contain a balance between an authenticity, creativity, usefulness, technology and engagement. Therefore, optimising, aggregating and curating content in order to make it valuable for the target audience is an important stage in the process of the content marketing as well. The third step refers to the changes in the methods of communication between businesses and their customers. Thus,

with the growth of the Internet, the old hierarchical relationships between organisations and their target audiences have been substituted by a two-way communication and in order to execute a successful marketing strategy, companies need to primarily focus on what their customers say, want and need. Finally, the last step of the process is about ensuring that the current content is effective and relevant to the audience and most importantly, meeting the expectations of both parties involved: businesses and their customers.

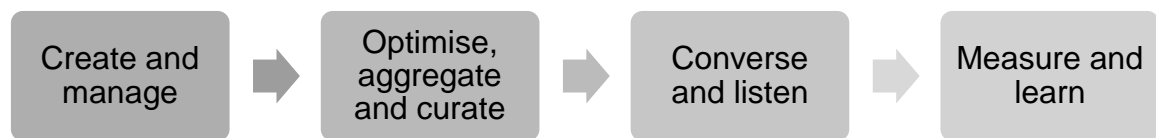


Figure 10. The content marketing stages (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)

Obviously, depending on the outcomes, organisations should either continue delivering a relevant content to their target markets or improving and optimising it in order to achieve the core goal of every content marketing strategy – the creation of a valuable experience. (Rose & Pulizzi, 2011)

3.3 Social media channels

The social media exists in many different forms and types. (Zarrella, 2010, 3) Some of the most popular ones can be divided into several categories depending on the purpose of use: networking sites (Facebook, LinkedIn etc.), blogs (WordPress, Medium etc.), microblogs (Twitter, Tumblr etc.), media-sharing sites (YouTube, Instagram etc.), collaboration sites (Slack, Trello etc.), review and recommendation sites (TripAdvisor, Yelp etc), and various discussion forums. (Pönkä, 2014, 83-164; Zarrella, 2010, 3)

Tuten and Solomon (2014) have categorised all social media platforms into four specific zones that are illustrated in Figure 11. They are:

- 1) *Social community*
- 2) *Social publishing*
- 3) *Social entertainment*
- 4) *Social commerce*

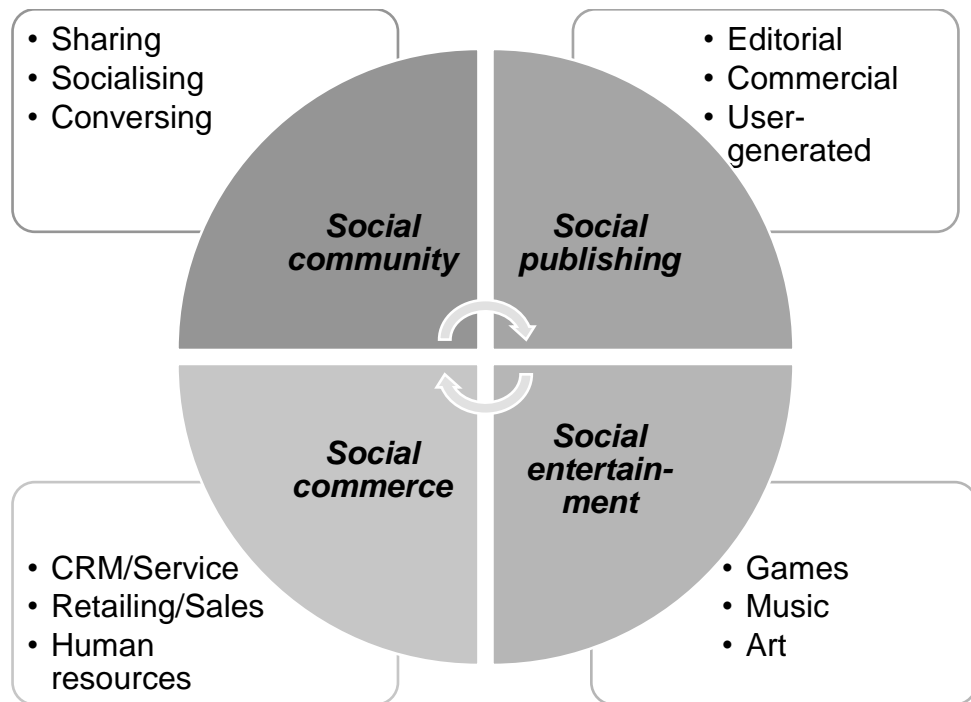


Figure 11. The zones of social media (Tuten & Solomon, 2014)

Thus, each specific zone is characterised by a set of functions that describe and unite various social media platforms:

Zone 1: Social community

Although all social media platforms are meant for providing individuals with the possibility to connect and communicate, social communities are characterised by their fundamental purpose to support interaction and collaboration. The social community includes social networks, message boards, forums and wikis. (Tuten & Solomon, 2014)

To start with, the social network sites include online platforms that enable individuals to create digital profiles, connect with other members and interact with them. Hence, individuals create social identities by adding pictures and avatars, updating the information about themselves and customising their profiles. Then, they maintain their online presence through connecting with other members (friends and followers) and interacting with them through instant messages and chats and finally, they share their own life updates by indicating their availability, mood and online status. The core focus of social networks is the individual communication and engagement in the context of community. (Tuten & Solomon, 2014)

The forums are the digital venues, where people, who are concerned about the same topics and issues gather to discuss the specific matters, share own opinions and interact with other members. The forums are created on the basis of the mutual interests and hobbies with the purpose of exchanging ideas and engaging in threaded discussions. (Constantinides, 2014, 56)

Finally, according to Leuf and Cunningham (2001) the wikis are flexible, open source, thematic online workspaces that enable individuals to collaboratively create a specific content. The core idea of the wikis is the creation of a database with the help of the community. Individuals collaborate by sharing relevant information and editing, modifying and revising an already existing content. Some of the examples of social community zone include social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other channels.

Zone 2: Social Publishing

The core characteristics of the social publishing zone are the production of a content as well as its publishing and distribution. The social media platforms belonging to this zone have enabled all individuals regardless their professional background to produce their own content. As it has been mentioned by Tuten and Solomon (2014), the social publishing democratised a content production. Social publishers can be divided into four groups: individual users, independent

professionals, professional contributors and brands. Whereas the social publishing zone includes blogs, microblogs, media-sharing sites, bookmarking services sites and news sites as well.

The blogs are regularly updated platforms that are run by individual authors, professionals or organisations. They contain a specific text-based content and might also include various media material like images, videos as well as other hyperlinks. In addition to being a social share tool, blogs are also participatory as they enable readers and followers to reflect on the blog posts and therefore, engage in the discussions with the other members. (Kanter & Fine, 2010, 185)

Additionally, according to Tuten and Solomon (2014), the media-sharing sites serve a similar function as blogs, whereas the biggest difference is in the content format. While the blogs mostly refer to the text material, the media-sharing resources typically contain visual, video, audio and other types of content. However, similarly to the blogs, they work as a social and a networking tool as well. Some of the social media platforms belonging to social publishing zone are: WordPress, YouTube, Instagram and other channels.

Zone 3: Social entertainment

The social entertainment zone refers to the social media platforms that provide content relating to entertainment, enjoyment and fun. For instance, the social media channels that allow playing games, listening to music and watching videos. (Whiting & Williams, 2013, 362-369) However, it is important to mention the context of the social networking as well because the platforms belonging to this zone involve an interaction between individuals through exchanging various content as well as posting personal updates. (Tuten & Solomon, 2014) Good examples of social entertainment platforms are: YouTube, Spotify, Reddit and various online interactive games like Trivia Crack, Candy Crush and other.

Zone 4: Social commerce

Finally, the zone of the social commerce includes all interactive services that influence an individual's buying decision. In other words, it refers to all social media platforms that customers use during the whole process of the decision-making.

Thus, various social marketplaces and e-commerce sites enable individuals to do the online shopping, buy and sell different products and services. Additionally, they trigger the customer's need using the advertising as an external stimulus. Various sites containing deals, offers and discounts, undoubtedly, catch the customer's attention during the next steps of the decision-making process – information search and evaluation of alternatives. Obviously, with the extensive use of the Internet and a great number of alternative solutions available online, customers have a chance to look for the best product or service available for the most budget-friendly price. Finally, review, rating and recommendation sites along with feedback shared via social media relate to the last stages of the buying decision process of an individual – purchase decision and post-purchase behaviour and can either positively or negatively affect a customer's experience. Thus, the social commerce enables individuals to actively participate in the process of the marketing, buying and selling of products or services online. As a result, the social commerce has transformed the process of the e-commerce and empowered customers to interact with each other and consequently, affect each other's purchase decisions. (Hajli, 2015, 183-191) Some of the social media platforms relating to the fourth zone of the social commerce include Yelp, Groupon, Etsy and other.

In order to analyse the specific social media platforms, it is important to identify the most relevant ones for the research of this thesis. According to the statistics on the most popular social media channels used by Generation Z members in Finland, among the leading platforms are WhatsApp, YouTube and Instagram. (Statista, 2016) The more detailed illustration is shown in Figure 12.

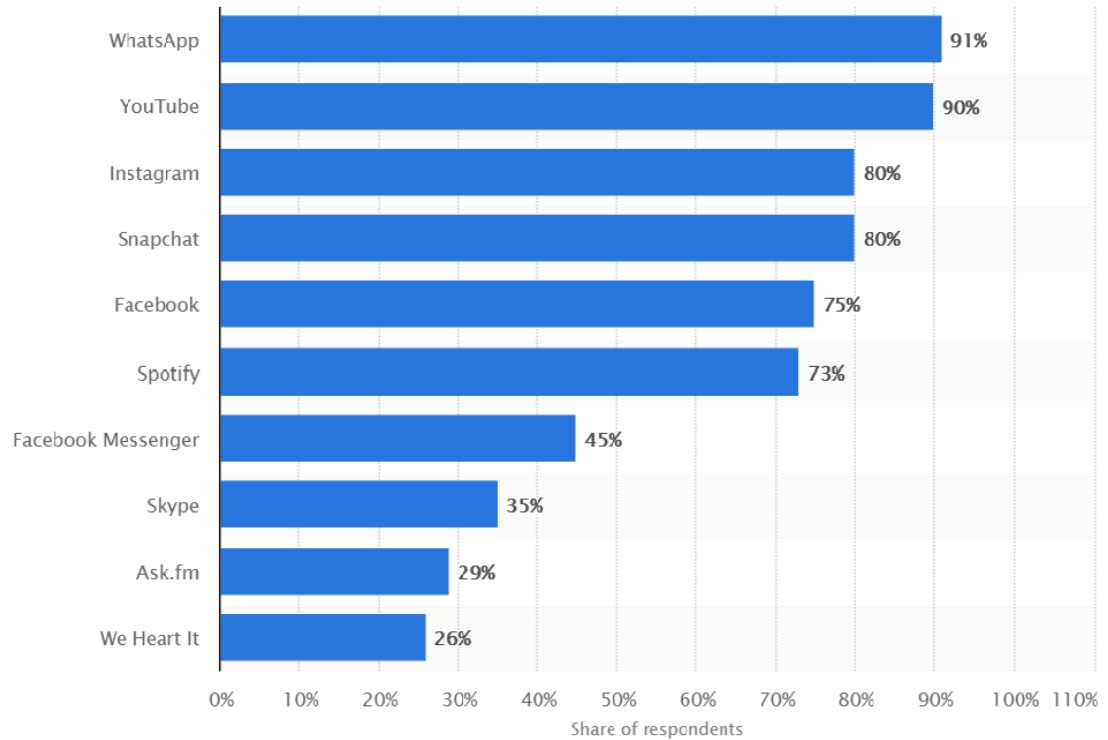


Figure 12. Share of users of the top 10 social media platforms among 13 to 17-year-olds in Finland in 2016 (Statista, 2016)

To start with, *WhatsApp* is an online communication tool that enables users to exchange instant messages and various media material such as images, videos as well as voice and video calls. WhatsApp gained its popularity as a mobile application because of its variety of functions and, most importantly, the cost-free features compared to the original messaging and calling functions on mobile phones.

YouTube is the most famous video-sharing platform that is used for uploading, publishing, streaming and viewing videos online. However, with 90% of usage among Generation Z members in Finland and 95% worldwide (Bazilian, 2017), YouTube has become much more than just an average social media platform for them. Instead, it is a place where they follow the lives of their favourite online personas, discover the latest news, learn new things and spend their free time as well.

Instagram is a social media platform used for sharing pictures and videos either publicly or among the approved followers. Instagram allows its users to use various photo effects, filters and editing tools and therefore, is used as a “portfolio” or a “photo album”. However, Instagram also provides its users with an opportunity to add text under the image as well as upload various videos and so-called Stories that disappear within 24 hours, which made it possible to work as a blogging platform for different social media influencers as well as the average people interested in sharing their own life moments with others.

Snapchat is a relatively new mobile application that allows its users to exchange various media content that is only available for a short period of time. It is extremely popular among today’s youth and used as a platform for chatting, private and public photo and video sharing, broadcasting and many other functions.

Facebook is a well-known social media platform through which users communicate with each other, join different groups and communities, share various content and follow people and pages they are interested in. The main strength of this social media platform is in its enormous database and multifunctionality. As for Facebook Messenger, it is a mobile application among Facebook users for instant messaging, sharing media content and joining group chats.

Spotify is a music, podcast and video streaming social media platform. Additionally, it enables users to share music finds with their friends across the various social media platforms. Spotify contains a large audio and video library, where the users have a chance to explore various content such as the latest pop hits, educational podcasts and high-quality video recordings.

Finally, the services *Skype*, *Ask.fm* and *We Heart It* have accounted for the approximately same percentage of the social media user share among Generation Z members in Finland. Skype is a digital service enabling chatting, video and voice calls between individuals across the various devices, Ask.fm is a networking platform that allows individuals to ask and answer questions either between users or completely anonymously, whereas We Heart It is an image-based online

platform for various pictures that can be saved, organised into collections or shared with friends.

3.4 Social media trends among Generation Z

There is no doubt that today, the social media is one of the most effective ways to engage with Generation Z. However, it is constantly and rapidly changing and in order to succeed in the long run, companies need to stay on top of these changes and be aware of not only the current, but also upcoming trends in the social media marketing.

As it has been mentioned in the latest report on the digital trends in 2018 by GlobalWebIndex (2017, 4), the key to succeeding in today's globalised market is knowing your audience. Therefore, taking into consideration the behaviour and the perspective of Generation Z, who has been identified as the next consumer powerhouse (Perlstein, 2017) and has an emerging buying power of US \$44 billion (Sparks & Honey (2015, 3), is crucially important for any successful marketing strategy.

This subchapter discovers the main trends on the social media among Generation Z members. Additionally, it describes some of the key trends that will have the biggest impact on the overall area of the social media marketing and that companies, undoubtedly, need to be aware of.

3.4.1 Current trends

The social media has undergone a lot of transformations and changes in the last years. For instance, only during the past year 2017, Twitter has upgraded its 280-character limit, Instagram has created a multi-photo post layout and an ephemeral content that is available for a maximum time period of 24 hours together with a live streaming have started appearing and become popular across the various social media platforms. (Contreras, 2017) Among some of the most popular current social media marketing trends are: mobile-first, constant connection, short texts, images,

videos, live streaming, ephemeral content, social responsibility, ethics and authenticity.

Mobile-first

To start with, as it has been mentioned in the report by GlobalWebIndex (2017, 6), Generation Z can also be called “Generation Mobile” as one of their core differences from all the previous generations is the extensive mobile usage and the mobile-first mindset. Consequently, with 80% of their social media time spent on a mobile device, companies need to ensure that their web pages are responsive for the mobile devices, optimise their online content for smaller screens and most importantly, design their social media in a way that it grabs the 8-second lasting attention of Generation Z (Finch, 2015) and stops their endless screen scrolling. (Contreras, 2017)

Although a great majority of the most popular social media platforms have already become mobile-only or mostly mobile, some of the channels still keep designing desktop experience. However, this trend will only strengthen in the future and companies with the mobile-first mindset undoubtedly have an advantage over the others as far as Generation Z is concerned.

Constant connection

A generation that has been raised being surrounded by the technology, undoubtedly, values an accessibility, connectivity and instant services. Today's youth expects companies to be constantly available and ready to assist them whenever and wherever it is needed. For instance, many successful brands are using messaging apps such as Facebook Messenger and WhatsApp as a communication method instead of the traditional emails and website contact forms. (Bodnar, 2017) Consequently, all the organisations need to take into consideration this trend and adopt the newest technologies in order to be able to keep pace with the newest generation of consumers and their expectations.

Short texts and images

As it has been mentioned before, the Generation Z's attention span is only a few seconds and in order to attract them, companies need to work on creating a concise, highly visual and attention-grabbing content that will immediately capture their interest. This trend has been highlighted by many individuals in the field of the social media marketing. According to Jeff Corbin, CEO and founder of APPrise Mobile, companies must think about the nature of the content they are creating. Today, it is all about thinking short, thinking pictures and videos and finally, thinking about the way this content will be displayed on a small screen. (Huhman, 2017) Dan Schawbel, the managing partner of Millennial Branding, has also mentioned the importance of this social media trend and stated that in order to reach the newest generation of consumers, companies need to communicate in five words and a big picture. (Williams, 2015)

Videos

Undoubtedly, video is the most rapidly growing trend in the social media marketing. This fact can be easily proven through the impressive statistics on the importance of the video content on the social media. Thus, only in 2017, 90% of all shared content was the video. (Wade, 2018) Additionally, 74% of all Internet traffic is represented by the video content (Contreras, 2017), which by the year 2020 will account for nearly 80% of all the traffic and will undoubtedly become the core of any successful marketing strategy. (Wade, 2018)

Most of the social media platforms have already implemented a video into their content. For instance, for Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and Twitter, a video is one of the most valuable content formats to increase the consumer engagement through the likes, comments, shares and other ways depending on the platform. Hence, according to Contreras (2017), over 100 million hours are spent on watching videos on Facebook. Whereas nearly 95% of Generation Z members watch YouTube and approximately 650 million hours are spent on the YouTube video content.

There is no doubt that nowadays, creating a high-quality and engaging video content is absolutely critical for any organisation willing to succeed. As in the nearest time the majority of the content online will be in a video format, ensuring that the produced social media content meets the expectations of today's youth is vital for any business. (Wade, 2018)

Live streaming

In addition to the high-quality videos, Generation Z members, who value authenticity and uniqueness, are attracted to a live streaming as well. They prefer following a content that is filmed in by the real people and demonstrates an authenticity rather than an edited and modified "reality".

As it has already been discussed, one of the core Generation Z values is a community. According to Contreras (2017), a live streaming creates a valuable collaborative experience through allowing individuals to interact with the host and other viewers as well by watching the video together, commenting, reacting and engaging in a dialogue in the real time. Hence, live videos are a highly effective way to engage customers and the sooner businesses realise its power, the more effective their social media marketing will be.

A lot of social media platforms have already enabled their users to stream the live videos. Some of them include Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube. Thus, only according to Facebook, live videos are six times more engaging compared to the non-live ones. (Bernazzani, 2018)

Ephemeral content

As already mentioned, an ephemeral content refers to the content that lasts for a short period of time and then disappears. It is connected with the common fear of missing out (FOMO) that is often experienced by Generation Z members, who have lived with the Internet since their birth and tend to stay connected most of their

time. Hence, an ephemeral content such as Stories or Snaps allows individuals to immediately share their real-time life moments and various information and encourage the general public to constantly keep a record of whatever interests them the most. (Contreras, 2017)

Although Snapchat is known to be the trend leader, nowadays, a great number of other social media platforms have implemented an ephemeral content as well. Hence, Instagram Stories, Facebook Stories and other recently launched features have shortly become famous among today's youth and for example, 250 million people regularly follow Instagram Stories compared to Snapchat's 166 million daily users. (Contreras, 2017)

This trend is extremely popular among Generation Z members as it resonates with some of their core values: community, speed, authenticity and freedom. Thus, the above-mentioned Stories and Snaps allow individuals to easily and quickly connect with each other in the real-time and most importantly, not leave any saved communication history or shared material as it is going to be self-deleted within 24 hours. Generation Z is very concerned about their privacy and for this reason, this social media trend allows brands to not only successfully execute their marketing strategies, but also, most importantly, connect and engage with the newest generation of consumers.

Social responsibility, ethics and authenticity

Undoubtedly, as it has already been noted in this thesis, Generation Z is far more concerned about a social responsibility of a brand and other important social issues compared to any other previous generation. Today, Generation Z members look for much more than just a good product or service for a fair price. Instead, they are interested in a socially responsible behaviour of a brand and the value it delivers for the greater good. Their social passions include human rights, equality, diversity, environmental issues and many other crucially important values. Hence, whether a brand is ethical, supports these social issues and resonates with these values

can greatly affect the Generation Z's attitude towards this business. (Perlstein, 2017)

Additionally, nowadays, Generation Z members value an authenticity and a real-life content. Thus, the social media influencers have gained a lot of popularity today as Generation Z auditory resonates with them more than with the traditional celebrities, models and industry experts. Additionally, the spontaneous photos and videos, looks behind the scenes and other authentic and real-time content is much more valuable and effective when it comes to Generation Z. (Wade, 2018)

3.4.2 Future trends

In addition to the current social media trends, which are expected to strengthen even more during the upcoming years, there are a lot of assumptions and predictions about how the social media marketing will continue evolving in the future. Thus, some of the expected future social media trends among Generation Z include technology, privacy, personalisation, interactivity and customer service.

Technology

In addition to various innovations in technology regularly evolving in today's world, the social media marketing will be also greatly influenced by some of the newest technology trends such as augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI). (D'Souza & Williams, 2017)

To start with, the AR is a computer-generated reality, in which people have a chance to project digital and 3D elements into an environment using technology. A good example of AR are famous face filters on Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook Stories and other platforms that allow individuals to fit the footage taken on their phone into various digital filters. Undoubtedly, AR provides businesses with a great number of possibilities to engage with Generation Z by creating interesting and interactive content. (Contreras, 2017)

The VR trend in the social media marketing is also expected to grow in the future. VR creates immersive and memorable experiences for the users while keeping the content as authentic and realistic as possible. Hence, it provides brands with various marketing opportunities for the newest generation of consumers passionate about technical innovations and real experiences. (Krey & Rossi, 2017, 701-703)

Finally, the AI will enable businesses to implement different smart solutions into their marketing strategies. A good example of such a solution is the voice-controlled services. Thus, according to the research conducted by Google, 52% of individuals would like to receive information about deals, sales and promotions from the voice-activated devices. (Kleinberg, 2018) AI will also strongly affect the customer service sector on the social media, which will be discussed later in this subchapter as well. Thus, it is extremely important for companies to rethink their marketing strategies and allocate resources effectively taking into consideration the latest technology innovations that will continue driving social media marketing in the nearest future.

Privacy

Unlike the previous generation of the millennials, Generation Z members are much more concerned about privacy issues, are less interested in sharing their lives on the social media platforms for the public record (Contreras, 2017), and intent on keeping their privacy sacred. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 56) Consequently, cyber security and improved privacy protection will be some of the most critical issues in the society that, undoubtedly, affects the social media marketing as well. Additionally, the social media platforms that encourage anonymous or ephemeral content compared to the traditional ones with their permanent user records, are going to be more attractive for Generation Z.

Personalisation

With the improved social media analytics tools, companies are able to create a more personalised content for their audience. Undoubtedly, customers are much more attracted to the content that they feel connected to and that resonates with their personalities, interests, habits and other factors determining their customer behaviour. Thus, according to Contreras (2017), 74% of the Internet users dislike the social media platforms that promote sponsored content that has nothing to do with their interests. Consequently, in the future brands need to improve their personalisation algorithms in order to be creating relevant and engaging content in addition to personalised customer experience to be able to engage the newest generation of consumers.

Interactivity

In addition to personalised content, Generation Z will be expecting brands to create interactive and highly-engaging content as well. Instead of a pushed promotion, brands need to cooperate with Generation Z and give them a chance to share their opinions. For instance, various polls, contests and finally, communication methods on the social media will gain even more popularity in the nearest future. Therefore, the more interactive and user-generated a content is, the more engagement brands can receive from Z members. (Contreras, 2017)

Customer service

Furthermore, a great transformation is expected to happen to a customer service on the social media. According to the study by Abbott (2017), who interviewed 32 media experts about their predictions on the future of the social media marketing, a great number of professionals have highlighted the importance and popularity of chatbots on the social media. Chatbots are computer programmes that are capable of human-like communication. Today, chatbots provide an instant and personalised customer service with 24/7 accessibility. (Wade, 2018) Undoubtedly, chatbots have greatly revolutionised the customer service sector and have enabled

businesses to interact with their audience quickly, effectively, cost-efficiently and in a personalised way. This trend will be one of the biggest ones to take place in the social media marketing and will obviously have an influence on the way businesses engage with Generation Z.

4 CASE COMPANY

The commissioning party of this thesis is a Finnish social media agency Hurja Media Oy. The company was established in 2014 by two social media professionals and at the moment it has 3 employees in addition to the founders and some freelancers as well. The company has offices in Helsinki and Tampere, but operates around Finland and internationally as well.

Hurja Media's activities include social media marketing, branding, advertising, content creation, social channels administration and other activities such as coaching and strategy creating. As it has already been mentioned, Hurja Media is a B2B company that assists both B2C and other B2B companies as far as the social media marketing is concerned. However, this thesis is particularly focused on the B2C customers of Hurja Media Oy.

The company's business model can be demonstrated through three major parts of their business activity:

1. *training and coaching (Finnish: sosiaalisen median pajat or “#somepajat”)*
2. *strategy development (Finnish: sosiaalisen median työstöt or “#sometyöstöt”)*
3. *administration (Finnish: sosiaalisen median ylläpito or somen ylläpito)*

Firstly, Hurja Media regularly organizes different workshops and events devoted to various topics related to the social media. These workshops include training and coaching sessions, in which companies have a chance to learn about relevant topics and most importantly, attend some training seminars and put theory into practice. In addition to already existing thematic workshops, Hurja Media also

offers to create tailor-made sessions for businesses and assist them in the chosen topics. Secondly, a strategy development is related to an effective planning of various projects, campaigns and other activities that businesses deal with occasionally. For instance, different product or service launches, competitor analyses, marketing plans, content strategies and other projects. This work is completed by Hurja Media within a week, but, depending on the project work, the completion might take longer as well. Finally, administration refers to assisting, creating and maintaining the social media marketing activities of their customers. Thus, in addition to regular coaching, the company designs engaging content and develops future plans as well.

It is also crucially important to mention one of the main concepts of Hurja Media's business activities – the so-called *social media breakfast* (Finnish: *sosiaalisen median aamupala* or “#someaamupala”). It has been running since 2013 and its main purpose is to gather individuals and businesses interested in the topic of the social media marketing. Additionally, the company's approach to coaching and assisting enterprises in their social media marketing activity initiated from the concept of *social media academy* (Finnish: *sosiaalisen median akatemia* or “#someakatemia”), where the founders had begun developing their ideas concerning the social media marketing.

One of the core values of the company is courage. At the moment, Hurja Media is working on various interesting and exciting projects. When asked about the future, they responded that even though the ways of doing marketing and interacting with customers might change, the core idea of creating and delivering valuable customer experience will always be the most important aspect of their work.

In addition to being a courageous company, Hurja Media aims at being aware of the latest social media marketing trends and constantly improving their business. For this reason, the topic of the social media marketing for Generation Z was not only interesting for them, but also extremely important for their business as well because as a marketing agency, they must be aware of the newest generation of consumers transforming the future of the industry. Thus, the theoretical framework

of this thesis will provide Hurja Media with an in-depth understanding of Generation Z and a comprehensive outlook of the main theoretical concepts of the social media marketing, whereas the research results and accomplishment of the research objectives will demonstrate the importance of understanding the newest generation of consumers in practice and help the company to improve their current business activities in order to successfully engage with Generation Z.

5 METHODOLOGY

This chapter is dedicated to understanding one of the most important parts of this thesis – the research process. In addition to the theoretical background and a detailed explanation of the process, research methods, research design, data collection and data analysis are included in the methodological framework as well.

The research process itself is related to a systematic investigation of the information and knowledge on a specific phenomenon. Research comprises defining problems, identifying hypotheses, collecting and analysing data, formulating conclusions and finally, testing these conclusions. As for the research methodology, it refers to the scientific approach adopted to conduct a research. (Mishra & Alok, 2017, 1)

In order to successfully complete a research, it is vital to understand its purpose. Thus, according to Kothari (2004, 2), the main aim of a research is discovering answers to relevant questions using scientific procedures. Depending on the purpose, research objectives can be divided into four categories:

1. To get familiar with a phenomenon or to gain new insights (*exploratory or formulative research*)
2. To accurately describe the characteristics of a specific concept (*descriptive research*)
3. To determine the frequency of a certain occurrence (*diagnostic research*)
4. To test a hypothesis of a relationship between different variables (*hypothesis-testing research*)

As mentioned earlier, there are three main research objectives in this thesis:

- *Gain an understanding of Generation Z characteristics and consumer behaviour*
- *Determine the current and upcoming social media marketing trends among Generation Z*
- *Provide Hurja Media with effective solutions to successful social media marketing for Generation Z*

Therefore, exploratory or formulative research was chosen for the given thesis. As the concept of Generation Z is still quite new today and there is a limited amount of studies related to the social media marketing for Generation Z, this research will provide familiarity with a relatively new phenomenon and achieve new insights into it. According to Richey and Klein (2014, 43), exploratory research studies are applied to topics that are very little known and researched.

Four main research questions were developed in a direct correlation with the above-mentioned objectives:

RQ1: What are the personality traits of Generation Z?

RQ2: What is the consumer behaviour of Generation Z?

RQ3: How does Generation Z transform the social media marketing?

RQ4: How to effectively engage Generation Z?

As it has been noted by Kothari (2004, 6), research is especially valuable as it solves different operational and planning problems of a business or industry. Therefore, by getting the questions listed above answered, the case company of this thesis will be able to successfully create the social media marketing strategy for the newest generation of consumers and solve the problem that is faced by many organisations today – being able to engage with Generation Z.

5.1 Research methods

According to Kothari (2004, 2-4), there are different types of the research depending on the nature and purpose of the study and other attributes such as a research methodology, investigated problem, motivation and other. Some of the most basic research types include:

- *Descriptive vs. Analytical:* the main difference lays in the purpose of the research. Thus, a descriptive research type provides straightforward facts and information without developing an argument or analysing the information, whereas an analytical type goes beyond simply describing the facts. Instead, it involves examining, comparing and evaluating the information.
- *Applied vs. Fundamental:* applied research aims at solving a real-life problem facing an individual, an organisation or the society as a whole. A fundamental research type is a broader and more generalised one, which is mostly concentrated on the overview of a theory.
- *Quantitative vs. Qualitative:* the main differences between these research types include a data sample, data collection, data analysis and other essential research data. Hence, a quantitative type generates the data numerically, whereas the latter research type applies for the non-numerical data.
- *Conceptual vs. Empirical:* a conceptual type focuses on the abstract ideas or theory. Oppositely, an empirical research type is based on the reliable data that can be verified through various observations and experiments.
- *Some other types of research:* based on the factors such as a purpose, time, environment or other similar research elements, the research type can exist in many other forms. For instance, a field-setting research, laboratory research or simulation research, clinical or diagnostic research, historical research, conclusion-oriented research and other.

The major research approaches refer to the quantitative and qualitative methods. As it has already been mentioned, a quantitative approach is used for generating

a numerical data, whereas the latter one is characterised by a qualitative data for the purpose of exploring, describing or explaining. (Bernard, 2012, 391-394)

Taking into consideration the above-mentioned criteria, as far as this thesis is concerned, the conducted research can be described as analytical, applied and empirical. However, the elements of other research types are present as well. For instance, in addition to a broad analysis, this thesis provides a number of straightforward facts and information (descriptive), covers the generalised concepts of Generation Z and the social media marketing (fundamental) and includes a broad theoretical framework as well (conceptual).

In the given research, both approaches, quantitative and qualitative were used. Undoubtedly, the advantage of using both methods is in the broader and deeper understanding of the concept. Thus, three research methods were used in this thesis: *a strategic analysis, a survey for the Generation Z representatives and interviews with three Generation Z members*. Firstly, a strategic analysis using a qualitative research method helped to gain an extensive knowledge and understanding of Generation Z and their social media behaviour. Secondly, a quantitative approach was taken for the survey for the members of Generation Z. It helped to provide a precise numerical data about their personality traits, consumer behaviour and overall social media usage. Finally, the interviews that, similarly to a strategic analysis, were created using a qualitative research approach, provided a more detailed information and insights into the topic of the social media marketing for Generation Z. The more detailed explanation of the research methods is covered in the next subchapter of this thesis.

5.2 Research design

This subchapter provides a detailed overview of the research methods used for acquiring a relevant data that is required for answering the defined research questions. Therefore, the core purpose of the research design is to ensure that the ways the data is collected, and the tools used during the process are aimed at finding the answers to the stated research problems as well as achieving the defined research objectives through the application of various scientific

procedures. Thus, as mentioned earlier, the given research was designed with the use of three main instruments: a strategic analysis, a survey and interviews, which are described in this subchapter.

Strategic analysis

To start with, a strategic analysis is a dynamic process that, using appropriate analytical tools and techniques, provides the insights into the context and characteristics of a specific aspect. The process of the strategic analysis includes the assessment of the internal and external variables with the purpose of formulating a successful strategy and improving an organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Depending on the nature and the objectives of the analysis, a range of different tools may be used. (Zanoni, 2011, 18-19)

As it has been mentioned before, the purpose of the strategic analysis conducted in this thesis is to provide an overall understanding of Generation Z, its personality characteristics, consumer behaviour and finally, the social media marketing opportunities for organisations willing to connect with the members of Generation Z. Thus, after a careful consideration of the various strategic tools and the already existing theoretical framework of this thesis, two of the most relevant to the given research techniques were selected, as follows:

- *SWOT analysis*
- *Benchmarking tool*

SWOT analysis was selected with the purpose of evaluating the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as far as the social media marketing for Generation Z is concerned. It is generally known, that SWOT analysis is an effective tool to align the internal and external variables with the purpose of creating an effective strategy. (Pahl & Richter, 2009, 4) As for the benchmarking tool, it was chosen for the evaluation of various businesses that have successfully implemented the social media marketing tools and managed to engage with the

newest generation of consumers. The results of the strategic analysis are demonstrated in the sixth chapter of this thesis.

Survey for the Generation Z representatives

A survey is one of the most common research methods and has been a central strategy in the research process for a long time. To start with, a survey is an act of examining and inspecting information with the purpose of collecting a specific data. The main goal of the survey is to produce statistics, which is a quantitative description of some aspect of the study. (Andres, 2012, 9-11) Although some sources state that the survey can be divided into two major categories – *the questionnaire and the interview* (Swanson & Holton, 2005, 99), the term *survey* used in this thesis is referred to the questionnaire type of the research methods, whereas the *interviews*, which are discussed in the next subchapter of this thesis, describe the process of the interview itself.

The survey conducted in this thesis was designed with the purpose of acquiring and analysing a valuable numerical data about the personality traits, consumer behaviour and the overall social media usage of Generation Z. The survey type chosen for the given research was a self-administered online questionnaire, where individuals had to complete the survey without any supervision of the interviewer. Thus, there are two major types of surveys: *self-administered surveys and group administered surveys*. The main difference lays in the process of completing the survey. The self-administered surveys are designed to be completed by a respondent without the supervision of the interviewer, whereas the group administered surveys are, oppositely, conducted in a group format. Although the surveys are still completed individually in the latter type of the survey, it is possible that interviewers might have some influence on how the survey is completed, which is, undoubtedly, a potential limitation for the data analysis. (Andres, 2012, 47-48)

Interviews with the three Generation Z members

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 91-102), an interview is a dialogue and interaction between individuals with the purpose of producing a research data. Depending on the nature of the interviews, they can be categorised into three types:

1. *Structured and standardised*
2. *Guided and semi-structured*
3. *Unstructured, informal, open and narrative*

Thus, the interviews belonging to the first type tend to have a pre-designed script which is strictly followed during the interview. This type of an interview gives a little flexibility for the respondents and is mainly used for collecting facts and reducing the variety of the responses. Guided and semi-structured interviews include some of the characteristics of the previous type as a pre-formulated script can be used for the interviews as well. However, this type enables interviewers to modify the questions along the interview and interact with the respondents instead of simply asking pre-designed questions. Finally, unstructured interviews are focused on developing an understanding of a specific topic and do not rely on a predetermined outline of topics and questions. Instead, the questions are created during the interview and depend on the responses of the interviewees. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015, 91-102)

After carefully analysing and considering each of the above-mentioned interview type and taking into account the aspects of the research of this thesis, it has been decided to choose the second type of the interviews – guided and semi-structured. As a result, in addition to a predetermined set of questions and topics, it was possible to ask for some additional information that was relevant to the research objectives and added value to the interviews.

The main purpose of implementing this research method into this thesis was to gain a deeper understanding of the both personal and consumer characteristics of

Generation Z. In addition to that, the practical questions and tests completed during the interviews using one of the customers of Hurja Media, it was possible to analyse the behaviour of Generation Z in practise.

5.3 Data collection

This subchapter provides a detailed description of the research process and transparently illustrates the development of each separate method used as well as the overall primary and secondary data gathering processes. Thus, according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 82-86), there are two major data types: *primary data and secondary data*. The primary data refers to the original data collected by the researcher himself/herself, whereas the secondary data, by contrast, includes the already existing research conducted by someone else for other purposes. This thesis includes both types of data and while the survey and the interviews belong to the primary data type, the strategic analysis relates to the secondary one.

Strategic analysis

Firstly, as it has been defined by Pahl & Richter (2009, 5), the SWOT analysis is completed through collecting the relevant data from different sources with the purpose of analysing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. In practise, this specific method was chosen for this thesis in order to provide a significant data on Generation Z for the companies willing to successfully engage with the youngest generation of consumers. For this reason, the SWOT analysis helped to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the Generation Z members and minimise the potential threats by taking the advantage of opportunities available for connecting with today's youth.

Regarding the benchmarking tool, according to Stapenhurst (2009, 24), the data collection process consists of acquiring the already available data relevant to the given study and primarily obtaining new data through various methods such as tests or surveys. Furthermore, combining both approaches allows the benchmarker to corroborate the findings in order to receive valuable to the research information. The benchmarking tool used in this thesis mostly relied on the already existing data

on the businesses that managed to successfully engage with Generation Z. However, it is important to mention that the author also took into consideration the information about both personality and consumer characteristics of Generation Z that has been acquired during the development of the theoretical part of this study.

The data essential for a successful strategic analysis was gathered during the time between 12 February 2018 and 18 February 2018 and collected from various scientific literature as well as different online sources. Thus, a SWOT analysis was conducted after a complex examination of the existing material on the topic of the social media marketing for Generation Z as well as the theoretical framework of this thesis, which covers two key aspects of this study that have been mentioned earlier. Additionally, the process of benchmarking was supplemented by the websites and social media platforms of the selected companies (Adidas, Nike and Tommy Hilfiger) that have successfully managed to engage with the members of Generation Z. Thus, the author has carefully analysed the social media channels of the selected companies as well as the content they produce. Individual posts have been taken into consideration (writing style, media content, interaction with the audience) and also, the overall appearance of their social media marketing strategy has been examined by the author. As a result, the research added an extra value to the data, which provided a number of opportunities for a better-quality research analysis. (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015, 82-86)

Survey for the Generation Z representatives

According to Weisberg et al. (1996, 35), the survey process consists of three major stages:

1. *Survey design and data collection*
2. *Data analysis*
3. *Reporting results*

Firstly, it is very important to define the objectives of the research, prepare the survey design by choosing the target audience, construct and categorise the

questions and finally, create the questionnaire itself. The survey conducted for this thesis was focused on understanding the personality characteristics of Generation Z, their consumer behaviour as well as the overall social media usage and preferences. Therefore, the target audience was Generation Z members born between 2001 and the present time according to Reeves and Oh (2008, 297). The survey was conducted in Finnish as the target audience of the commissioning party was located in Finland and consisted of 13 questions, which were divided into three major categories: demographics, online consumer behaviour and psychographics. The first part included the overview of the individuals completing the survey, the second part covered their general attitudes towards the social media, opinions about different social media channels and information they are looking for through these channels, a content they prefer, devices they use and some other information about their preferences and the overall behaviour. Finally, the last part covered their psychographic characteristics such as their personality traits, values and other qualities.

The questions included in the survey were of different types including the close-ended questions such as the single answer and multiple answer questions, rating scale questions, likert scale questions, matrix questions and two open-ended questions as well. Initially, the author created a list of questions using the Word programme. After sending the questions to the commissioning party as well as the supervisor of this thesis, the author made some necessary corrections that have been noted by Hurja Media as well as the supervisor. After finalising the questions, the survey was created using Webropol – the online survey tool, which was very easy to use and most importantly, provided a detailed report and analysis of the received responses. The full survey is presented in Appendices 1 and 2, whereas the data analysis and the results are covered later in this paper.

The survey data was collected through two main sources. Firstly, the author of this thesis contacted beforehand a number of schools in Finland and asked for a permission to distribute the survey among the students belonging to Generation Z. Overall, approximately ten schools located in the major cities in Finland (Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Oulu and Jyväskylä) as well as some smaller towns located in the

same regions were contacted by the author. Three schools did not agree to participate in the research due to a busy schedule of the students, whereas two schools agreed to take part in the survey and agreed to distribute the online questionnaire among the students belonging to the given age group. Although the rest of the contacted schools did not reply to the inquiry, the large number of the received survey responses might indicate that the questionnaire had been distributed among them as well. The schools were informed of the purpose of the study and all the important details of the research, as well as of the topic of the thesis, the commissioning company and the research objectives. Additionally, they were informed of the confidentiality of the survey data and were provided with an approximate time duration of the process of completing the survey.

Secondly, the commissioning company of this thesis, Hurja Media Oy shared the survey link on their company Facebook page as well. They provided information about the thesis and the research process as well. Additionally, the target audience of the research was mentioned by Hurja Media as it was especially important to get information from the individuals belonging to the given age group, whereas all the irrelevant data could be withdrawn. Overall, the survey was running for one week (12 February 2018 – 18 February 2018), and 145 responses were collected during this time. Thanks to the consistency of the responses, no reminders have been sent by the author.

Interviews with the three Generation Z members

As stated by Pawar (2004, 32), the process of data collection during the interview research method consists of five major steps:

1. *Interview preparation and arrangement*
2. *Beginning the interview*
3. *During the interview*
4. *Closing the interview*
5. *Reflecting on the interview*

In the case of this thesis, the schools contacted for the purpose of requesting a survey distribution, which has been discussed earlier, were also asked to distribute the information about searching for three volunteers belonging to the age group of Generation Z, who were born between 2001 and the present time (Reeves and Oh, 2008, 297), and willing to participate in the interview part of the research process of this thesis. As a result, seven people were interested in taking part in the interview process, out of whom three people were chosen by the author: two males (aged 12 and 14) and one female (aged 15). Due to limited resources and thanks to the fact the above-mentioned three interviewees were from the same geographical area (Southwest Finland), the author contacted the individuals and introduced the study and the research to the potential interviewees. The interviews were conducted between 5 February and 11 February 2018 and took place at the school of the interviewees. Obviously, the interviews were conducted in person and each of the interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes.

The interview, as well as the survey, was conducted in Finnish using various questions about the personality characteristics of Generation Z, their online consumer behaviour as well as their social media usage. Additionally, the commissioning party of this thesis had requested using some practical exercises during the interview in order to examine the behaviour of Generation Z. Thus, a Swedish film production company, SF Studios, which is one of the customers of Hurja Media, was used as an example for some of the tasks during the interviews. For example, Generation Z members needed to give their feedback concerning the social media profiles of the company as well as their overall opinion about each separate social media channel of SF Studios. Overall, the interview consisted of 14 questions. However, some questions were modified during the interview as well depending on the received response. The full list of questions can be found in Appendices 3 and 4, whereas the main findings are summarised in the sixth chapter of this thesis.

Firstly, the interviewees were informed of the research purpose, the type of information that was relevant to the given research, and finally, the basic terms such as *company*, *brand*, *marketing* and *other* were explained as well as the target

audience involved teenagers who might not have been aware of the meaning of this terminology. Additionally, it is important to mention that the interviewees were assured in the confidentiality of the interviews and were asked for the permission to record the research process. Finally, in addition to recording the interviews, the interviewer took notes as well, which were later edited in order to make them more comprehensible.

5.4 Data analysis

One of the final steps of the research process includes analysing the acquired data. According to Malhotra et al. (2012, 327), the core purpose of the data analysis is to gain valuable insights from the data received and to collect valid and reliable information that helps to achieve the initial research objectives, answer the main research questions, and finally, solve the stated research problem.

As it has been previously mentioned, the research conducted for this thesis utilised both approaches, quantitative and qualitative. Thus, it is crucially important to analyse each of the research methods in order to gain a better understanding of the collected data.

Qualitative methods

The strategic analysis, as well as the interviews, relate to the qualitative methods. To start with, according to Schutt (2011, 326), the qualitative data analysis process consists of four steps:

1. *Data collection period*
2. *Data reduction*
3. *Data display*
4. *Conclusion drawing and verification*

The process of conducting a strategic analysis followed the above-mentioned process. Thus, firstly, the data was collected from the various sources such as a

scientific literature and online channels as well. Secondly, the collected data has been analysed, redundant and excessive information has been eliminated, whereas only relevant to the research data has been recorded. Next, using the strategic analysis tools (SWOT and benchmarking), the data has been displayed and consequently, the conclusions have been drawn and verified as well. In practice, the author has carefully reviewed the already existing data on the topic of the social media marketing for Generation Z, evaluated the relevance to the given study and analysed the data according to the tools mentioned earlier. Thus, Generation Z was examined taking into consideration both, their personality traits as well as the consumer behaviour, which have been discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis. As a result, it was possible to identify the strengths, weaknesses, possible opportunities and potential threats of the newest generation of consumers from the perspective of businesses willing to engage with them using the social media marketing.

As for the benchmarking tool, which provides an extensive overview of the organisations involved in the process of the social media marketing for Generation Z, as it has already been noted earlier, the author has carefully reviewed the social media channels of the selected companies and identified the tactics used by the businesses, which have successfully managed to engage with the newest generation of consumers. Both, the individual social media posts as well as the overview of the social media marketing strategy of the given companies were evaluated by the author. Additionally, some statistics and metrics, which demonstrate the quality of the certain tactics, have been recorded by the author in order to gain a deep understanding of the methods and techniques that the commissioning party of this thesis could successfully execute in their business activities in order to create an effective social media marketing strategy for Generation Z.

The process of conducting the interviews followed the same structure as well. To start with, as previously mentioned, the interviews were recorded during the research process as well as the detailed notes were also made by the author. Thus, according to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 197-199), transcribing the interview

records is an effective way to analyse the data. Each of the interviews lasted for approximately 45 minutes and after individual interviews, the author has categorised the responses into three major sections: the overview of the personal characteristics of Generation Z, their online consumer behaviour and their social media usage. Additionally, the answers to the before-mentioned practical questions and experiments based on the case of SF Studios company were included as well. As a result, only the relevant to the research data was recognized and used for the further analysis. In addition to the individual analysis of each of the interviews, the author had compared the responses as well in order to understand the overview of the aspects discussed earlier. After a careful analysis, the findings were presented in a logical and detailed way, which could be later utilised for both, supplementing the data and findings received through the other research methods and drawing the final conclusions based on the research objectives of this thesis as well. However, most importantly, it can be used for providing the commissioning party with the valuable, relevant and up-to-date information about the way Generation Z perceives the social media marketing.

Quantitative methods

As it has already been noted, the survey completed by the Generation Z representatives relates to the quantitative research methods of this thesis. According to Burnie (2002, 91), the data acquired through the quantitative research tends to be easier to analyse compared to the qualitative research method as it can be quantified using the computer software. McGivern (2013, 424) stated that there are several major stages in analysing the quantitative data as follows:

- *Organising the data*
- *Getting to know the data*
- *Understanding the data*
- *Connecting the data*
- *Summarising the findings*

Thus, the author used the Webropol tool for conducting the survey and the Excel programme for extracting the gathered the data from the respondents, categorising and summarising it and finally, completing a data analysis. According to Weisberg et al. (1996, 188), it is crucially important to individually examine the responses to single questions and only after that analyse the relationships between them. Similarly to the interviews conducted for this thesis, the survey questions were divided into three major categories: demographics, online consumer behaviour and psychographics. Therefore, in addition to analysing the individual answers, the author has analysed the overview of each of the survey category. Additionally, the answers of Generation Z members were examined separately as well as studied by the author considering the interconnections and differences between them.

6 RESULTS

According to Swanson and Holton (2005, 344) reporting the results and drawing conclusions is one of the most vital parts of the whole research process. If there are multiple research methods involved in the study, as in this thesis, the results of every single method must be reported separately, followed by the integrated analysis of all the methods used.

This chapter describes the research results which were divided into the primary and secondary data results. Hence, the former includes the results received from the online survey and the interviews, whereas the latter represents the strategic analysis. In order to provide a complete analysis of the results, in addition to the written analysis created by the author and supplemented by various scientific sources, different visual elements such as graphs and tables as well as the quotes and transcripts from the original research data are included in this chapter as well. However, the full survey and interview question lists are provided in the Appendices 1-4 at the end of this thesis.

6.1 Primary data

As mentioned earlier, Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 82-86) stated that the primary data refers to the original data collected for the first time by the research

for the purpose of the specific research project. The findings presented in this subchapter include the results received from the online questionnaire and the interviews, and are divided according to the structure of these research methods, which has been discussed before in this thesis.

Survey for the Generation Z representatives

The online survey was available for one week during the period from 12 February 2018 to 18 of February 2018, and the total amount of responses received was 145 (N=145). However, it is important to mention that not all the questions were mandatory, and for this reason, the total number of the respondents (N) is mentioned for each individual question discussed in this subchapter. The survey included the questions divided into three major categories: *demographics, online consumer behaviour and psychographics*.

Demographics

To start with, according to Richey and Klein (2014, 100; 156), demographic data refers to the statistical information on a population segment such as age, gender, ethnicity, education, occupation, income level and other data that is proven to be critically important for many research studies.

For the research specifically conducted for this thesis, two of the most important demographic pieces of information were age and gender of the respondents. The demographic data is demonstrated in Figure 13.

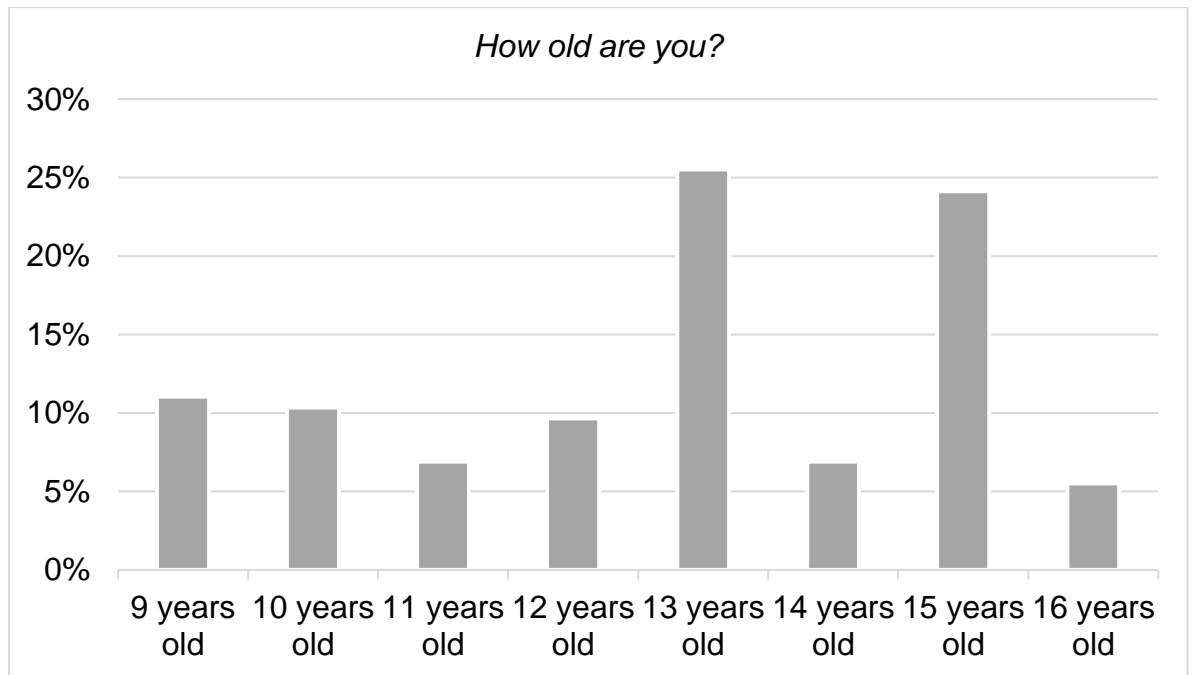


Figure 13. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: demographics (made by author)

As it can be seen from the figure above, 145 survey respondents were between 9 and 16-year-old. The biggest majority were from the 13-year-old age group, whereas approximately the same amount of people was from the 15-year-old group. 9-year-olds, 10-year-olds and 12-year-olds formed the second largest majority that equals about 10%. Finally, less than 10% was accounted for the Generation Z members of 11, 14 and 16-year-olds.

As for the second most important piece of the demographic data, both genders were almost equally represented among the respondents. Thus, 49% were males, 43% were females, while 3% chose the option “Other”, and 5% preferred not to answer.

There were two main reasons for not including any other questions relating to the demographic background of the respondents. Firstly, the target audience was very clearly defined and narrowed down in the beginning of the research development process. Hence, Generation Z members answering the survey needed to be from Finland, whereas the exact location was not relevant for the given research. Secondly, naturally, Generation Z in most of the cases are still students and therefore the occupation was also defined during the process of selecting the target

group. Finally, after a careful consideration and data analysis, it was decided not to include any irrelevant data that would not bring any potential value for both, the research of this thesis and the commissioning company as well.

Online consumer behaviour

The questions belonging to this survey category study the overall behaviour of Generation Z on the social media as well as the ways they perceive brands and finally, make purchase decisions. According to Chaffey et al. (2009, 626) it is really important for brands to understand the online behaviour of their target audience as the gap between the customer expectations concerning the online performance of a brand and the actual offer can significantly affect the overall customer attitude towards this brand.

According to the questionnaire results, almost half of the respondents (N=145) stated that social media played an important role in their lives, whereas 12% chose the option “Very important”. The rest of the answers were either “Neutral” or “Not important” (34% and 8%). To gain a better understanding of what social media channels companies need to be focusing on today, the next question was about the social media platforms that the respondents were registered on. The data (N=145) is presented in Table 2 and arranged in the numerical order starting with the largest amount of people registered to the smallest.

Table 2. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

<i>Social media platform</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Percent</i>
WhatsApp	135	93%
YouTube	127	88%
Snapchat	122	84%
Instagram	116	80%
Facebook	75	52%
musical.ly	37	26%
Twitter	36	25%
Twitch	31	22%
Other	26	18%
Pinterest	26	18%
Jodel	6	4%
YouNow	4	3%

As it can be seen from the results, top five of the most popular social media platforms among Generation Z in Finland include WhatsApp, YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram and Facebook. According to Table 2, 26 people or 18% of respondents chose the option “Other”. As the questionnaire included the field, in which those who answered “Other” had to elaborate on their responses, the author was able to receive the significant data of the insights of Generation Z. Thus, answering to this particular question, the respondents suggested other social media platforms on which they were registered as follows: Spotify (5), Telegram (2), VK (1), V LIVE – Broadcasting App (1), Steam (1), Discord (1), We Heart It (1), Flipagram (1).

Next, out of all the platforms they were registered on, the respondents were asked to choose the ones that they use the most often. The options included *multiple times a day; once a day; a few times a week; once a week; a few times a month; less than the choices given; never*. The most significant results (N=145) were the following:

- **Facebook:** approximately a half of the respondents (45%) never use it
- **Instagram:** by contrast, more than a half (53%) use it multiple times a day
- **Snapchat:** a little over 70% use it multiple times a day as well
- **Twitch:** the majority of the respondents (69%) never use it
- **Twitter:** similarly to the previous social media platform, 69% of the respondents never use it
- **WhatsApp:** 57% of Generation Z members use it on a daily basis
- **YouTube:** most of the respondents (69%) chose the option “Multiple times a day”
- **Jodel:** the great majority (94%) never uses it
- **YouNow:** 96% never use this social media platform either
- **musical.ly:** a little under 70% never use it

As it has been noted earlier, the question included the option “Other” as well. However, the answers were quite similar to the previous question and the options suggested by the respondents were identical to the ones provided before.

The next survey question was aimed at understanding the online behaviour of Generation Z on each of the above-mentioned social media platforms. Therefore, the question was: *What do you use these social media platforms for?* Table 3 demonstrates the purposes with which Generation Z uses the social media platforms in addition to the most popular channels they use for each specific activity. (N=145)

Table 3. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

Activity	Social media platform
Texting and chatting	WhatsApp (79%), Snapchat (43%)
Catching up on the news	Facebook (29%), Twitter (17%)
Entertainment purposes	YouTube (52%), Twitch (43%), Instagram (37%), musical.ly (37%)
Shopping recommendations	Other (10%), Pinterest (6%)
Playing games	Twitch (13%), Other (8%)
Learning new things	Pinterest (23%), YouTube (12%), Other (10%)
Following favourite brands, celebrities, bloggers etc.	Instagram (20%), YouTube (18%), Twitter (15%), Snapchat (14%), musical.ly (12%)
Doing schoolwork	YouNow (8%), Other (5%)
Sharing own life updates	Instagram (15%), Snapchat (11%)

Additionally, 67% of the respondents use Jodel for some other purposes than proposed in the questionnaire as well as YouNow (50%) and Pinterest (44%). Finally, other social media platforms used for the purposes mentioned above were Spotify (4), Telegram (2), VK (1), V LIVE – Broadcasting App (1), Steam (1), Discord (1) and We Heart It (1).

According to Lieb (2011, 4), a valuable and inspiring content can greatly and in a positive way influence the way customers perceive a brand and therefore, nowadays, the content marketing is not a nice-to-have strategy anymore. Instead, it is a must-have and the sooner organisations realise it, the better value they will create for both, their own business and the target audience. For this reason, the next question in the survey focused on different content types, in which the respondents had to rate various kinds of content and choose the one that they found the most interesting. The results (N=145) are depicted in Figure 14.

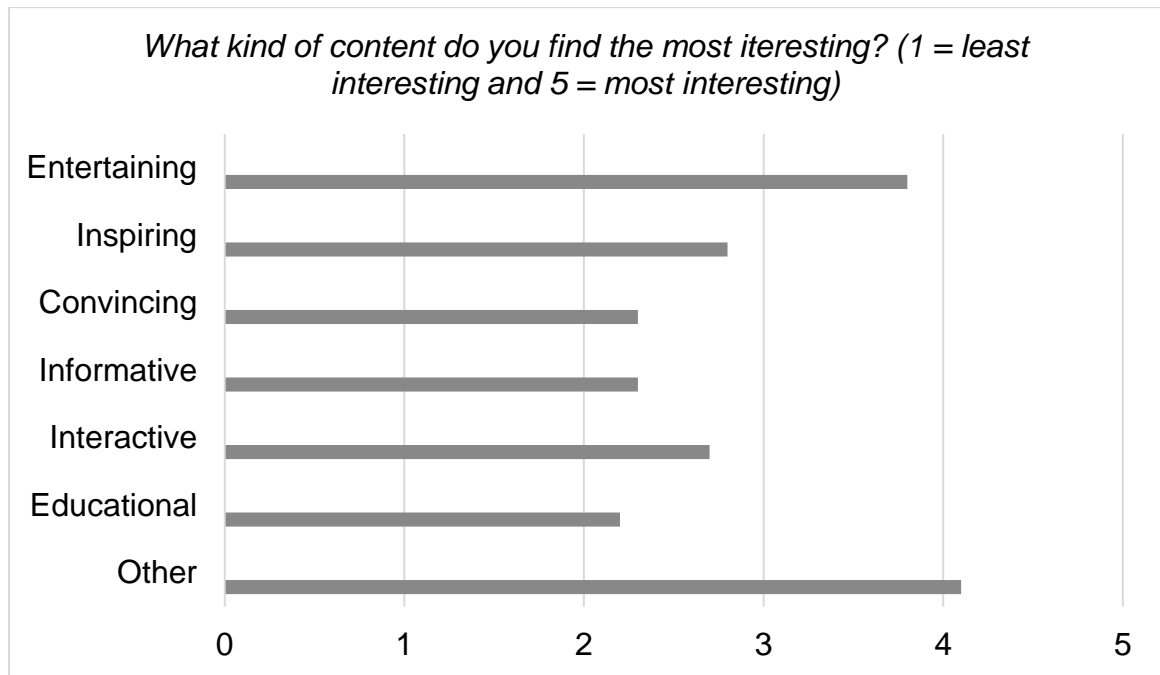


Figure 14. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

As it can be seen from the figure above, the most interesting content type among Generation Z is entertaining content such as funny images, videos, memes and comics. Some other types of content that were suggested by the respondents were “My day” videos, “Favourites” videos, fashion-related content and finally, games and gaming-related content were highlighted as well.

The eighth question was similar to the previous one and required the respondents to rate specific kinds of content depending on their personal preferences. The data received (N=145) is demonstrated in Figure 15.

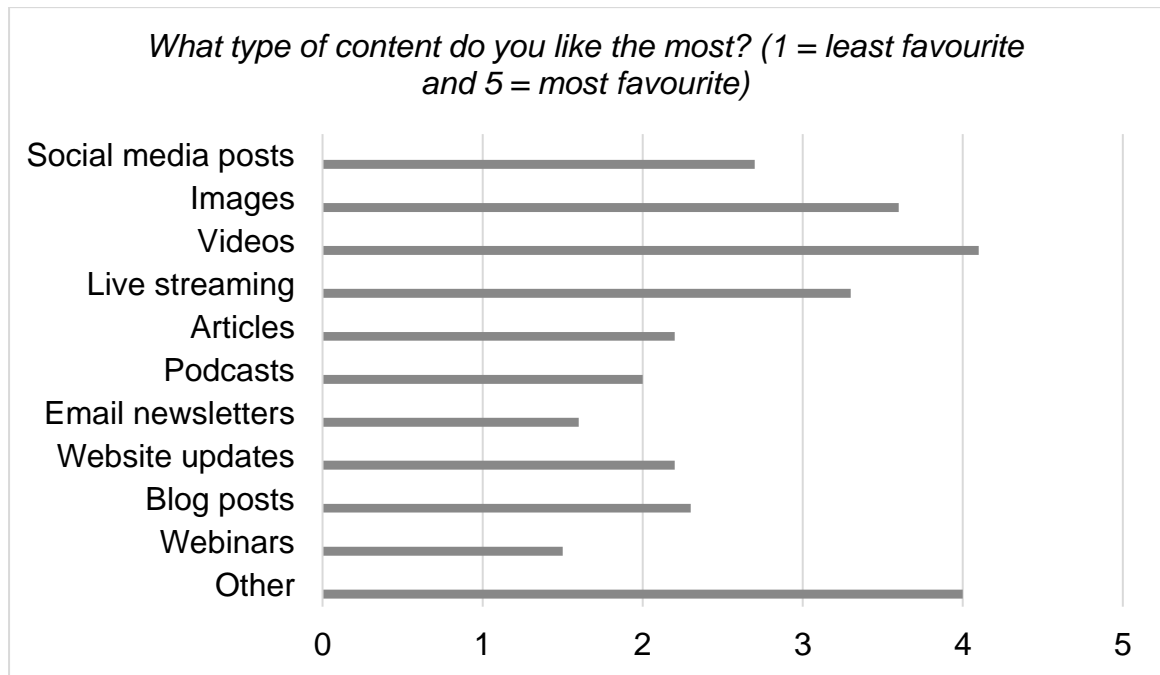


Figure 15. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

Thus, as it is demonstrated in the graph, videos are the most preferable kind of content for the newest generation of consumers, whereas webinars and email newsletters are the least favourite ones. Among other suggestions, in addition to the options provided for the previous question, it has been mentioned that various tests are also an interesting content format for Generation Z.

The last question that was aimed at studying the online consumer behaviour of Generation Z was: *Who do you prefer following on social media the most? (1 = least preferable and 5 = most preferable)*. This question supplements the above-mentioned research data and provides valuable information on who and what Generation Z is interested in. The results (N=142) are depicted in Figure 16.

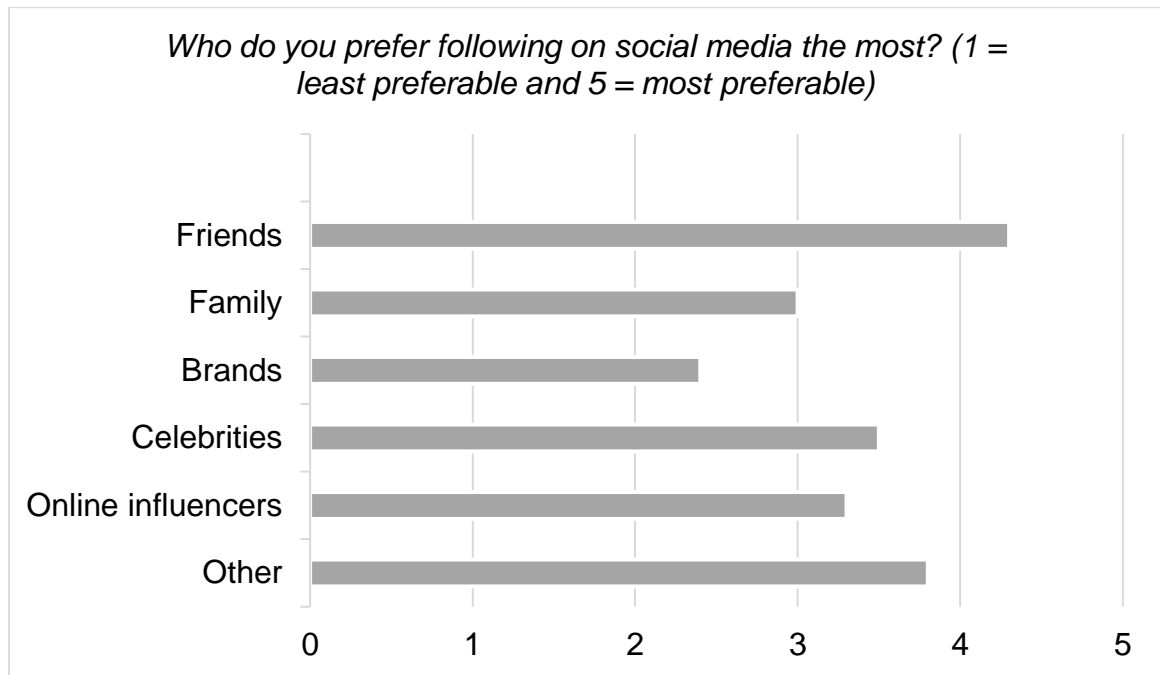


Figure 16. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

According to the data received, Generation Z is most likely to follow their friends on social media. Unfortunately, the respondents did not provide any valuable data for the research about the option “Other” as everything that had been listed there related to one of the categories that were mentioned in the options of this question.

Psychographics

To start with, psychographic characteristics of individuals are some of the most important factors affecting consumer behaviour. Psychographic characteristics are based on various factors such as an individual’s social class, lifestyle, personality traits, values, attitudes, interests, opinions and other elements that have a significant influence on the personality of an individual. (Armstrong, 2009, 197)

The questionnaire used in this research included two close-ended and two open-ended questions aimed at understanding the personal characteristics of the respondents. Firstly, the respondents were asked to choose the most important criteria that affected their brand perception. According to the data received (N=136), the brands they like are:

- *popular among their peers (51%)*
- *producing good quality products and services (51%)*
- *showing off their personality (51%)*
- *recommended by their friends or family members (38%)*
- *recommended by their favourite celebrity, blogger etc. (35%)*
- *budget-friendly (29%)*
- *aligning with their beliefs (26%)*
- *eco-friendly and socially responsible (16%)*

In order to supplement the data on the values of Generation Z and to understand what issues they find important, the next question in this category was: *How important to you are the following issues?* The results (N=144) are demonstrated in Figure 17.

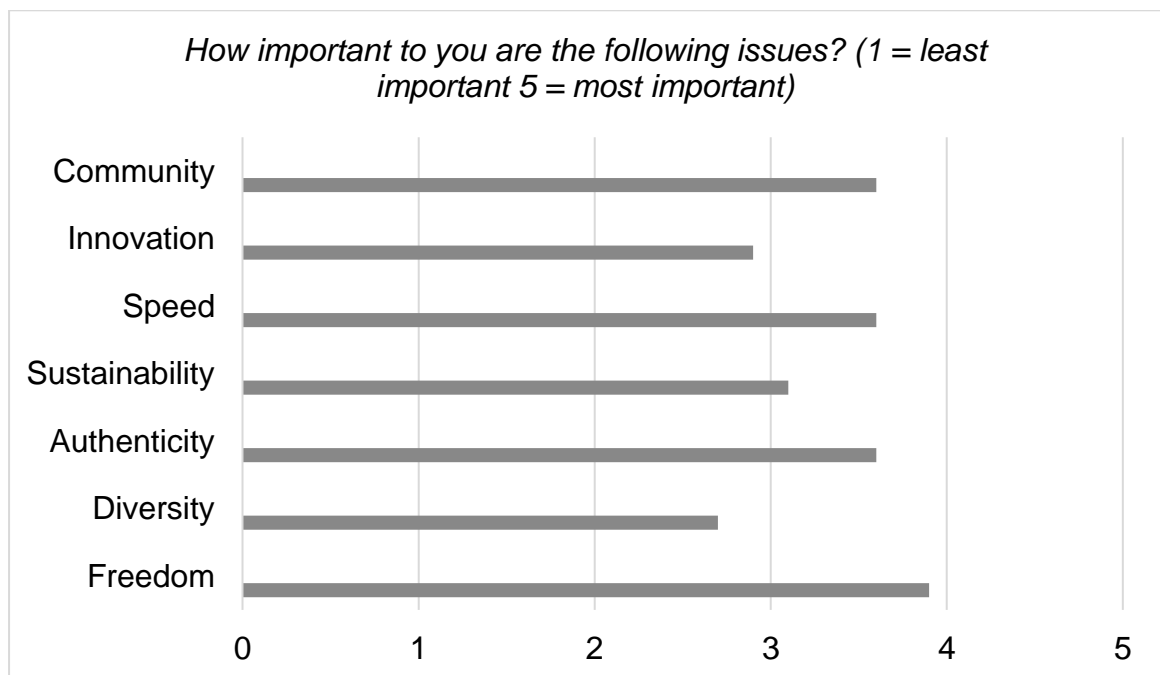


Figure 17. Survey for the Generation Z representatives: online consumer behaviour (made by author)

As a result, a freedom was selected as the most important value for Generation Z in addition to community, speed and authenticity, which accounted for approximately the same amount of responses. It is also important to mention that

besides the options demonstrated in the chart above, the respondents were provided with some explanation as well in case some terms were unfamiliar to them.

Two open-ended questions were included in the questionnaire as well. Firstly, the respondents were asked to give an example of one of their favourite brands. The answers received (N=109) were as follows: Adidas (26), Nike (10), Fazer (6), Tommy Hilfiger (5), Gucci (3), Apple (2), ASUS (2), GANT (2), Vans (2), Coca-Cola (2), and other brands that received a single vote. This question was not only valuable for the research of this paper in order to gain a better understanding of the consumer behaviour of Generation Z, but also for the benchmarking tool as another research method as well. Hence, the author has received significant data on what brands managed to catch the attention of the newest Generation of consumers and, most importantly, to engage with them. Finally, the last question required an explanation of why the above-mentioned brands were chosen by Generation Z as their favourites. The answers (N=106) varied greatly and some of the most frequent explanations were high-quality and budget-friendly products or services, correspondence with the own style and personality, and lastly, a popularity among friends, favourite online personalities as well as celebrities.

Interviews with the three Generation Z members

To start with, the interviews were conducted during the week between 5 February 2018 and 11 February 2018. As it has been informed earlier, the interviewees were three Generation Z members (aged 12 and 14, gender: male, and aged 15, gender: female). As for the length of the interviews, the first one with the 15-year-old interviewee took approximately 40 minutes, the second one with the 14-year-old, similarly, took a little less than 45 minutes, whereas the last interview with the 12-year-old participant lasted for about an hour. The interview questions were also divided into three major categories: *psychographics, online consumer behaviour and overall social media usage, practical questions based on the case of SF Studios*. This subchapter describes the main findings of the interview-based research method and covers each of the interviews separately, but taking into

consideration the similarities and differences between the acquired data that is, undoubtedly, useful for the future research analysis and the overall study as well.

Interview with the 15-year-old participant

To start with, the interviewee mentioned that the social media, without a doubt, plays a big role in her life. She mentioned that being connected is very important for her, and when asked about the average screen time, the interviewee mentioned that it is “almost all the time” unless she was in a big company of friends and family or there are some circumstances that do not allow using a phone.

The favourite social media platforms were Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp and YouTube in the order of her preference. According to the interviewee, Snapchat was mostly used for the purpose of communication and its main advantage over any other social media platforms is that the content you share does not get saved permanently, as it is automatically deleted within 24 hours. Secondly, Instagram was mostly used for following her favourite celebrities, online personalities and other people she is interested in. According to her, Instagram is a nice tool to follow the life updates of others and upload your own content that you want to save. WhatsApp, as it has been mentioned by the interviewee, worked as a communication tool with the family. As for YouTube, it was used as a service for watching various videos and following the lives of her favourite online personas as well. However, it was also mentioned that YouTube was used more often compared to the traditional search engines whenever she needs to find some kind of information.

The next question related to the most preferable content, and according to the interviewee, various sports, fashion and beauty-related topics were among her favourite types of online content. The interviewee was also asked to rate various content providers depending on her personal preferences. Thus, she was most likely to follow: 1) friends; 2) brands; 3) celebrities and online influencers; 4) family.

Similarly to the questionnaire described above, the interview also included a question about the favourite brands of the respondent. Some of the examples that were provided during this specific interview were Nike, GANT, Tommy Hilfiger, Adidas and MAC Cosmetics. As for the most important criteria for choosing a brand, she mentioned that the brand needs to align with her personality and resonate with her values in addition to produce a good quality products or services. The importance of the online behaviour of a brand was also mentioned during the interview, and according to the respondent, how active a brand is on social media does have a positive influence on her buying decision. She was also asked to list the platforms on the social media that she personally expects her favourite brands to have presence on. The answer highlighted the importance of YouTube and Instagram.

As for the practical part of the interview questions, the author has carefully studied the online behaviour of the respondents while completing the tasks. To start with, the information about SF Studios company was acquired by the interviewee from the official company website that was found using a traditional search engine. The interviewee paid attention to the written content of the website and identified the concept of the company within a short time. As far as the tasks related to the social media profiles of the company (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and Twitter) were concerned, the interviewee immediately highlighted the amount of famous people and characters that SF Studios features on their online channels as well as the number of followers, subscribers and the overall engagement with the public. Concerning the online behaviour that was noticed by the author the interviewee did not spend more than a minute analysing each of the platforms, and mostly paid attention to the images and videos provided on the company's social media channels.

Interview with the 14-year-old participant

The importance of the social media in the life of the second interviewee was highlighted as well. Thus, according to him, the social media is used “almost all the time, especially when bored or there is a notification alert”. The favourite social

media platforms in the order of preference were as follows: Snapchat, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitch, Facebook, Instagram. Firstly, Snapchat, according to the interviewee, was mostly used for the communication purpose with his friends. Secondly, YouTube was for watching various videos and live streaming as well. WhatsApp, similarly to the previous respondent, was a communication tool with the family. Twitch is meant for recording and watching gaming-related content. The interviewee mentioned the importance of various thematic groups on Facebook. However, he was not interested in it as a social media platform itself. Finally, Instagram was mainly executed by the respondents because of the ability to follow the lives of favourite celebrities and online personas.

As for the preferred content, the interviewee mentioned various entertaining content such as funny videos and memes as well as gaming-related kinds of content. Videos were prioritised by the respondent, whereas images and short text-based social media posts were also mentioned during the interview. For the question “Who do you mostly like following on social media?”, the interviewee prioritised friends, online personas, favourite celebrities, family and lastly, brands.

Adidas, Nike, Xbox, MSI and Yamaha were among the most favourite brands of the respondent. According to him, it is important that a brand produces good quality products and services and is budget-friendly. Personally, he expects brands to be present on Facebook and Instagram.

While completing the practical part of the interview, firstly, the respondent searched for the company using a traditional search engine. It is important to mention that the interviewee made a remark that “website provides a much more valuable and reliable information as, for example, anyone can edit content on Wikipedia, so it cannot be fully trusted”. Similarly to the previous respondent, he also mentioned the famous celebrities SF Studios features on their social media channels. In addition to the previous interviewee, he paid much more attention to the images and videos compared to the written social media posts. As for the overall behaviour, the short attention span was also mentioned by the author and each test for different social media platforms did not take more than a minute either.

Interview with the 12-year-old participant

The final interviewee also mentioned the importance of the social media in his life, “especially for the purpose of staying connected”. His favourite social media platforms were as follows: YouTube, Snapchat, Instagram, Twitch and WhatsApp. To start with, YouTube was mostly used by the interviewee for watching various video content, live streaming and overall online time spending. Snapchat, similarly to the previous respondents, was perceived as a communication tool with the friends. Instagram was mostly used for following the lives of people he is interested in. Twitch, as it has already been mentioned by the previous interviewee, was used for following the thematic gaming-related content, whereas WhatsApp was used for keeping in touch with the family members.

Video content was also prioritised by the last interviewee along with pictures and short social media posts. The interviewee mentioned that he prefers following on the social media his favourite online influencers, family, friends, celebrities and brands in the order of preference.

Adidas, Nike, PlayStation, KTM and Apple were listed among his favourite brands. The respondent stated that some of the most important criteria for choosing a certain brand include popularity among his friends, price friendly and good quality products and services, and an alignment with his personal style. In addition to that, the interviewee highlighted the advantage of the brands that support various social and environmental issues over other companies. The main reasoning was stated as “everyone must be treated equally”, and undoubtedly, environmental issues are very crucial today as well. He expects brands to be present on Instagram because of the ability to discover pictures of the products and YouTube as well. However, it is also very important to mention the comment of the interviewee about having marketing-related content on YouTube. Thus, he mentioned that he preferred watching videos and other content created by his favourite online personas such as bloggers, vloggers and other compared to the content created by the company

itself as, according to him, it is most likely to be an advertisement and therefore, not reliable and authentic.

Concerning the practical part of the interview process, the main source of information about the company was the website that was found using a search engine. Firstly, the images and videos featuring various celebrities and famous people were noticed by the respondent as well. The interviewee paid attention to the amount of customer engagement SF Studios company receives on their social media channels, for instance, followers, subscribers, amount of views and other elements. It was also noticed by the respondent that the company provides good quality online content and overall look of their social media channels is very modern and harmonious. The time spent on each of the social media channel analysis did not exceed a minute, which has proved the fact about the attention span of Generation Z. (Finch, 2015) As mentioned earlier, the full list of the questions used for the interviews is provided in the Appendix 3 and 4 later in this thesis.

6.2 Secondary data

According to Schutt (2011, 413-414), secondary data refers to the previously collected data which is used for a different research purpose than the originally intended one. This subchapter describes the method of strategic analysis and its elements that have been used in this thesis in order to answer the given research questions and achieve the research objectives of this study.

As it has been stated by Zanoni (2011, 3), strategic analysis refers to the process of collecting, examining and evaluating data relevant to the research. There are two main tools used in this paper: SWOT analysis and benchmarking technique.

SWOT analysis

It is generally known that SWOT is one of the most effective strategic analysis techniques that helps to identify the biggest strengths, minimise weaknesses, take advantage of opportunities available and finally, take into consideration potential pitfalls or threats of the business. (Pahl & Richter, 2009, 3-6) However, instead of

focusing on a specific company, SWOT analysis conducted for this thesis includes a broader perspective of the social media marketing industry for Generation Z. Thus, the strengths refer to the main advantages and unique characteristics of Generation Z as far as social media marketing is concerned. The weaknesses relate to the limitations and negative factors of the newest generation of consumers that prevent business from successfully engaging with them. The opportunities stand for a wide range of possibilities for creating a valuable social media marketing for Generation Z, whereas the threats refer to the potentially harmful factors that need to be addressed by the organisations in order to effectively execute their marketing strategies targeted at Generation Z.

With the help of the broad theoretical framework of this thesis as well as the use of various scientific sources, the author has created a SWOT analysis of the social media marketing for Generation Z. The canvas is demonstrated in Figure 18 following the detailed explanation of each of the elements included in the analysis.



Figure 18. SWOT analysis (made by author)

To start with, as it has earlier been noted before in this paper, Generation Z is the next powerhouse of consumers. Having a buying power accounted for between US \$29 and US \$143 billion taking into consideration their influence on household

spending as well, this generation is expected to become the largest consumer generation within a few years. (Fromm, 2018) Thus, according to Perlstein (2017), Generation Z members will be estimated at about 40% of all consumers in two years' time. For this reason, it is crucially extremely for organisations to fully understand and estimate the strengths of the newest generation of consumers and allocate their strategies accordingly. In addition to that, as it has been stated in the report by Vision Critical (2016, 3), Generation Z members represent the future of the global economy and it is vital for any business to understand their enormous impact on the overall business environment.

Concerning the weaknesses, it is necessary to mention that Generation Z has the shortest attention span among all the previous generations, which lasts for about 8 seconds. (Vision Critical, 2016, 3) Undoubtedly, it is a big challenge for a business to pass the so-called "8 seconds filter" and to create content that would capture the attention of Generation Z within seconds. Additionally, as it has been noted in the theoretical framework of this thesis, one of the core values of Generation Z is an authenticity. Therefore, they are very sceptic about brands, sponsored content, celebrities and other traditional marketing tactics as they would rather engage with the transparent and authentic businesses. Consequently, brands need to work hard on creating unique, real and truthful content that would resonate with the Z's as well as communicating with them in an unfiltered and genuine way. Finally, being raised in an era of highly innovative technologies and growing up in a world of constant improvements and updates, they tend to have higher expectations compared to the previous generations. Undoubtedly, this creates new challenges for a business that not only needs to keep up with the latest trends, but also be creative and innovative in order to satisfy the newest generation of consumers.

Despite the possible weaknesses, there is a number of opportunities available for organisations willing to engage with Generation Z. Firstly, with the extensive use of technology, companies are provided with endless possibilities on how to approach Generation Z members. For instance, multichannel and multidevice marketing strategies that provide customers with the preferred choice of a channel

and device as well as enable businesses to approach their target audiences across various platforms using different tools. (Keillor, 2013, 135-136) In addition to that, taking into consideration the importance of the brand's mentality for Generation Z, businesses are provided with an opportunity to engage with the newest generation of consumers on the basis of their brand personality and brand values. Thus, brands are more likely to gain the affection among Generation Z if their mentality resonates with the beliefs and values of Generation Z and lets them express their personality in a free and valuable way.

Finally, regarding the potential threats that companies need to pay attention to when dealing with the social media marketing for Generation Z, in the most rapid period of change, where trends are moving faster than ever, it is extremely important for a business to adjust with the latest changes. Similarly to the fear of missing out, which is very common among today's youth (Contreras, 2017), companies have a risk to be left behind the scene if they do not keep up with the latest developments, and as a consequence, lose the interest of the newest generation of consumers. In addition to that, for Generation Z members, who grew up being constantly connected and available, it is vital to be able to reach others whenever it is needed as well. Thus, businesses that have implemented the newest technologies in order to be accessible 24/7, have an absolute advantage over those that keep it all traditional and therefore, risk to be substituted by the former ones. Lastly, highlighting the importance of the brand's mentality, it is worth mentioning that businesses need to be careful with their actions when it comes to supporting customer loyalty among Generation Z as unethical decisions or behaviour will, undoubtedly, have a negative influence on the brand perception of the newest generation of consumers.

Benchmarking

To start with, benchmarking is one of the most effective techniques aimed at adapting the best practices with the purpose of improving the overall performance. (Zhu, 2014, 1) In this thesis, three businesses were chosen for the benchmarking research method in order to evaluate the effectiveness of their business operations

and processes as well as to identify their methods and techniques used for improving the engagement with Generation Z. The companies were chosen on the basis of the results received from the primary data analysis as well as the overall business performance. Thus, the companies used for the benchmarking analysis in this thesis include Adidas, Nike and Tommy Hilfiger. This subchapter will cover the general description of each of the companies and the analysis of their social media marketing activities.

Firstly, it is generally known that Adidas is the largest sportswear company in Europe manufacturing a wide range of the sports-related items. (Adidas Group) However, it is vitally important to mention that one of the strengths of the company is in its legendary “three stripes” brand. Adidas is extremely popular among today’s youth not only for its products that allow Generation Z to express their individuality, but at the same time follow the latest fashion trends, but also for its ability and willingness to adjust their business activity in order to meet the expectations of the youngest generation and successfully approach the digital transformation undergoing in today’s world. Thus, in addition to succeeding in the e-commerce business, Adidas has a strong social media presence as well.

- ***Authentic and unique.*** To start with, the concept of staying “true self” is greatly highlighted in the social media marketing strategy of Adidas. The topic of originality and creative expression, without a doubt, has a positive influence on the brand perception among the Generation Z members. A good example of such strategy could be the fact that Adidas cooperates with a great number of high profile personalities and even though other brands also use celebrities in their marketing strategies, Adidas takes a more personal approach towards this cooperation and creates individually-styled products taking into consideration the originality and uniqueness of each of the famous personas they cooperate with. For this reason, Generation Z perceives the brand in a more authentic and unique way compared to the traditional sales-driven advertisement with celebrities. In addition to that, the brand actively encourages individuals to share their experience of being part

of the Adidas group, which can be easily seen from their social media feeds with a great number of pictures featuring real and authentic people.

- ***Interactive.*** Another important value of Generation Z, which is actively supported by Adidas is the idea of involving customers in the company's business activities. For instance, multiple social media campaigns by Adidas that encourage the general public to participate in the creation of a certain product. Therefore, the brand creates a story together with the customers rather than only promoting its products and driving sales.
- ***Trendy.*** As it has already been mentioned, even though Adidas has a long story behind the brand, it still stays one of the trendiest companies on the market because of its ability to adjust to the changes happening in the world. Thus, as it has been mentioned by Roland Auschel, Chief Sales Officer at Adidas Group, mastering trends is one of the core priorities of the brand and a good example of such strategy is the fact that today, Adidas is more focused on reaching their target audiences on YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram compared to Facebook, which has become less popular among today's youth. (ISPO, 2017) Additionally, the amount of visual content such as images and videos on the company's social media platforms also proves that Adidas is aimed at learning the best practices and techniques when it comes to engaging with the newest generation of consumers.

Secondly, Nike is the world's largest sportswear manufacturer engaged in the design and production of various sports apparel. Similarly to Adidas, Nike is very popular among today's youth and is well-recognized thanks to its iconic slogan "Just Do It" as well as its successful social media marketing strategy for Generation Z. (Nike, Inc.)

- ***Brand personality.*** As the brand positions itself, Nike is more than just producing sports-related products, it is "selling a lifestyle". As it has already been mentioned, its legendary tagline "Just Do It" has been running for many years and successfully resonates with individuals passionate about the world of sports as well as the general public since this concept can be applied to every aspect of life. This concept supports empowerment and

promotes motivation for individuals. Nike appeals to Generation Z because of its dedication to a meaningful purpose rather than simply selling a product. Additionally, the way Nike does social media marketing and connects it with their core slogan, creates a unique brand image that, undoubtedly, captures the attention of Generation Z.

- ***Caring about social issues.*** As already mentioned earlier in this paper, the social issues play a big role in the lives of Generation Z members. Nike actively promotes various relevant to Generation Z and the whole society topics and organizes a number of campaigns supporting today's most important issues. Some of the best examples of Nike's use of social media marketing power to support the important to the society topics could be their various women empowerment campaigns, diversity promotion, support for the LGBT society and other important issues in today's world. In addition to that, the company actively supports the environmental issues as well and constantly implements new innovative ways to increase the sustainability of their business activity.
- ***Innovative.*** Finally, Nike takes into consideration the modern needs and expectations of today's youth when it comes to being digitally active, interactive and accessible whenever needed thanks to Nike's serious approach towards a customer service.

As for the third company, Tommy Hilfiger is an American designer brand producing premium quality clothing products. Although being on the market for quite a long time, the brand continuously adjusts its marketing strategy to the changes occurring in today's world as well as develops effective ways to engage with the newest generation of consumers. (Tommy Hilfiger Global)

- ***Involving social media influencers.*** Firstly, the brand's decision to cooperate with the famous online personalities rather than the traditional celebrities demonstrated the fact that the company has carefully analysed the consumer behaviour of Generation Z and has successfully implemented the relevant changes into their marketing strategy. Some of the most popular Tommy Hilfiger's collaborations with the social media personas

such as Gigi Hadid, Kendall Jenner and others have, undoubtedly, brought a huge success for the company's business, but most importantly, it helped them to gain the attention of today's youth and therefore, a new consumer powerhouse.

- ***Digitally friendly.*** The brand constantly improves its ways of doing marketing and two of the most innovative changes it has undergone during the last years were the extensive use of live streaming and the implementation of chatbots into the company's social media platforms. Thus, one of the recent Tommy Hilfiger's fashion shows was live-streamed and received approximately half a million real-time views from over 70 countries worldwide. Additionally, the chatbots that were implemented by the brand across different social media platforms help customers to explore the brand's new collection and choose the best items according to a customer's preferences, taste, style, size and other important details that are discovered using a chatbot communication tool. Also, the chatbots are ready to assist the customers with any issues 24/7. All of these innovations, undoubtedly, are valuable for today's youth and perfectly correspond with their brand expectations. (Tesseras, 2017)

7 CONCLUSION

The major concluding part of this thesis is devoted to answering the research questions stated in the beginning, formulating the development suggestions for the case company as well as analysing the research conducted from the perspective of its quality and limitations. In addition to that, future research suggestions are covered at the end of this chapter as well. It is important to mention that conclusions were drawn based on the broad theoretical framework of this thesis as well as the conducted research and the results discussed in the previous chapter.

7.1 Answers to the research questions

As it has been mentioned in the introduction part of this paper, four main research questions were developed with the purpose of reaching the objectives of this thesis. This subchapter provides answers to all the research questions in the

logical order. Although the questions are analysed and responded to individually, it is important to mention that the theoretical framework as well as the overall research data received through the study using various methods discussed earlier, is taken into consideration for all the answers provided in this subchapter. Finally, each of the objectives stated in the beginning of this thesis is listed together with the research questions in order to gain a broader understanding of the purpose of this work.

RQ1: What are the personality traits of Generation Z?

Objective: Gain an understanding of Generation Z characteristics and consumer behaviour

After getting a chance to learn about Generation Z's personality traits from their own perspective, three of the most important characteristics have been identified by the author: technology-reliant, connected, and socially responsible. Firstly, according to the theoretical framework as well as the research data, the social media plays an important role for the great majority of Generation Z members and is a big and inseparable part of their lives. (Lenhart, 2015) In addition to that, three interview participants mentioned that they used it most of the time. Therefore, it is needless to mention that technology is involved in every aspect of their lives and today, it is all about engaging Generation Z via various e-tools instead of the traditional practices that are completely left in the past by the newest generation of consumers.

Secondly, being connected does not only relate to the importance of not missing out as this is one of the biggest fears of Generation Z, but also to the fact that the world seems to be borderless for Z members. Thus, practically anyone and anything can be reached and done on the web, and Generation Z values this freedom and flexibility. As it has been mentioned by Sparks & Honey (2015, 30), being connected is simply a natural quality of Generation Z. In addition to that, the strong sense of community and being part of the greater whole also characterize Generation Z, for whom it is crucially important to not be left behind the scene and be able to connect with the like-minded individuals. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46)

Finally, Generation Z perceives social responsibility as the norm. They subconsciously express a greater support for companies that are doing socially “good” business as well as support human rights despite the differences between individuals. By doing that, Generation Z is aiming at satisfying one of their core desires – making a positive change in the world. (Brown et al., 2015) Additionally, they value authenticity and uniqueness in various forms and therefore, businesses that are open-minded towards new innovative ways have an advantage over the ones with the opposite vision. To summarise the results, the theoretical framework provided a broad understanding of the characteristics of Generation Z, whereas the research conducted helped to understand today’s youth on a more personalised level and confirm the data gathered from the secondary sources.

RQ2: What is the consumer behaviour of Generation Z?

Objective: Gain an understanding of Generation Z characteristics and consumer behaviour

To start with, as it has been mentioned in the theoretical part of this thesis, being immersed in the advertising ecosystem since their first days, Generation Z truly values authenticity and truthfulness. (Folmsbee, 2017) For this reason, their consumer behaviour can be characterised as sceptic towards brands in general. Companies willing to engage with the newest generation of consumers need to approach them in an authentic way by demonstrating that they are real people creating products or services for the equally realistic individuals. For instance, according to the research data received, Snapchat is the most popular social media platform enabling Z members to share real-life and “unfiltered” moments. Additionally, according to the survey statistics, brands are among the minority of content creators that Generation Z prefers following on social media. Instead, online influencers appeal to them more, despite the fact that they also promote sponsored content, because they are authentic and real people.

Secondly, the interview research method demonstrated the fact that it took no longer than a minute for Generation Z to evaluate a brand, which has also been

proven by Finch (2015), who stated that it takes around 8 seconds to capture the attention of today's youth. For this reason, businesses need to create content that would be able to grab the short attention of Generation Z in order to turn them into customers. According to the results received from completing a benchmarking research, it is obvious that Generation Z values the message behind the brand as well as the brand's personality which resonates with them. Thus, Generation Z expects companies to connect with them and help to express their personalities as well as values and beliefs instead of promoting products or services for the purpose of growing sales.

Finally, during the most rapid period of change, Generation Z consumers are following the latest trends and therefore, expect businesses to adjust their strategies accordingly in order not to be substituted by other companies open towards innovation and new ways of doing things. Although the theoretical framework provided the author with the broad understanding of the consumer behaviour of the newest generation, the research methods, especially the interview that enabled to see in practice the way today's youth perceives brands, have greatly expanded the knowledge and understanding of Generation Z as the next consumer powerhouse.

RQ3: How does Generation Z transform the social media marketing?

Objective: Determine the current and upcoming social media marketing trends among Generation Z

Firstly, it is important to mention that there have been major changes in the social media platforms among Generation Z compared to the previous generations. Thus, according to the research data received, Snapchat is the most popular social media network among today's youth, whereas almost a half of the survey respondents never use Facebook, which was extremely popular a few years ago. Consequently, with the appearance of new trends and innovations, companies need to adjust their marketing strategies and allocate their resources according to the preferences of the newest generation of consumers who do not tolerate the world lagging behind. (Vision Critical, 2016, 11) Additionally, Generation Z uses a wide range of social

media platforms for each stage of their customer journey. While Instagram and YouTube are the most common platforms to discover brands, Snapchat relates to the post-purchase stage of their journey and sharing the shopping experience. Secondly, it is very important to mention the topic of authenticity in this answer as well because today, brands that promote traditional celebrities in their marketing context are not as relevant as businesses that collaborate with online influencers, who obtain an enormous power and influence when it comes to Generation Z because of their perception as realistic and authentic content creators. (Tesser, 2017)

Finally, the transformation of the area of social media marketing can be demonstrated through the number of innovative solutions available today. In addition to the above-mentioned multichannel and multidevice possibilities, brands are expected to follow the latest innovative trends in the industry such as chatbots, augmented reality (AR), virtual reality (VR) and artificial intelligence (AI). (D'Souza & Williams, 2017) Thanks to a number of the recently produced and reliable sources used for the completion of the theoretical framework as well as the valuable research data received using both primary and secondary data sources, the author was able to gain an extensive understanding of the potential trends among Generation Z as far as the social media marketing is concerned.

RQ4: How to effectively engage Generation Z?

Objective: Provide Hurja Media with effective solutions to successful social media marketing for Generation Z

To start with, in order to answer this research question, the author summarised the theoretical framework of this thesis together with the acquired research data. Although the detailed development suggestions for the commissioning party are provided in the next subchapter of this thesis, it is important to mention two of the core ideas that enable businesses to successfully engage with the newest generation of consumers.

Firstly, it is extremely important to be aware of the latest ever-changing trends in the industry in order to stay competitive in the busy digital marketplace (GlobalWebIndex, 2017, 4) and, most importantly, to capture the attention of Generation Z who has a low tolerance for delays and expects businesses to keep up with the continuously improving world of marketing. (Vision Critical, 2016, 11)

Secondly, it is equally and vitally important to pay attention to the brand image and mentality of the business as engaging with the newest generation of consumers refers to creating genuine connections with them instead of pushing products and services. (Contreras, 2017) It is important to mention that according to the information provided in the theoretical framework of this thesis as well as the data received through the research methods discussed earlier, the way Generation Z resonates with a brand is one of the key factors influencing their buying decision. (Perlstein, 2017) Thus, bearing in mind two of the above-mentioned tactics as far as the social media marketing for Generation Z is concerned is guaranteed to provide companies with a valuable advantage over other brands that do not yet fully realise the economic power and influence of today's youth.

7.2 Development suggestions for the case company

In addition to the broad theoretical framework as well as the research data that have been discussed earlier in this thesis, the author has created a list of effective solutions and development suggestions for the commissioning party that can be utilised in order to successfully engage Generation Z as far as the social media marketing is concerned. It is important to mention that the ideas discussed in this subchapter can be implemented into the marketing strategy of both, Hurja Media as well as their B2C customers who were initially the core focus for the commissioning party's research interest. After carefully analysing the theoretical and practical data acquired through the extensive process of conducting a research, the author has identified five main areas of development for Hurja Media's business activities that, undoubtedly, will greatly benefit the commissioning party's approach to the newest generation of consumers. They are as follows:

1) Select the right social media channels

As demonstrated through the research data, even though Generation Z are present on a number of social media platforms, they do not necessarily use them all on a regular basis, which, obviously, affect the effectiveness of a brand's social media marketing strategy. Thus, the most often used social media channels are illustrated in Figure 19.

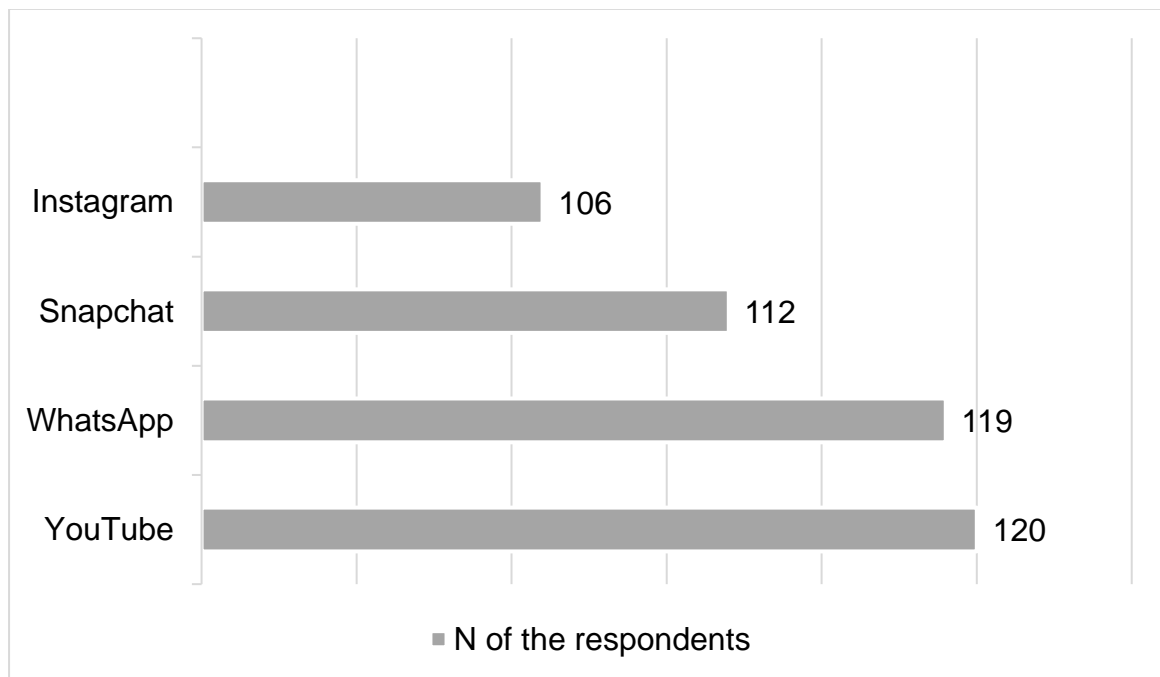


Figure 19. The most often used social media platforms by Generation Z (made by author)

As it can be noticed from the figure above, the preferences of Generation Z are completely different compared to the previous generations when it comes to using social media platforms. For this reason, companies willing to connect with the newest generation of consumers, must be aware of the preferred social media environment for Generation Z and therefore, approach them through the right digital channels.

2) Create relevant content

In addition to reaching Generation Z members via appropriate social media platforms, it is really important to capture their attention as well, which can be done through interesting, engaging and appealing content. As it has been mentioned in

the questionnaire and interview research results, various media content, such as videos and images, is by far the most preferable content type for Generation Z, whereas webinars, email newsletters, podcasts and articles have been selected as the most interesting types of content by the smallest numbers of the respondents. Therefore, Hurja Media as well as its customers, who are interested in creating an effective social media marketing strategy for Generation Z, need to take into consideration the type of content that would be relevant for today's youth.

It is also important to mention that the newest trends in the content marketing on the social media such as ephemeral content as well as live streaming are also worth considering as types of content that would enable companies to engage with Generation Z. Undoubtedly, catching the short attention of today's youth is challenging for businesses involved in the social media marketing. However, the right type of content will definitely be better noticed by them compared to the traditional marketing tactics used by companies that are not only ineffective towards Generation Z, but are also very likely to create a negative attitude towards a brand.

In addition to the content type, it is necessary to consider various kinds of content that would be engaging for Generation Z as well as relevant to a business. For instance, the most interesting content kinds that were mentioned during the research data gathering process were:

1. *Entertaining (funny images and videos, memes, comics and other)*
2. *Inspiring (pictures, stories, interviews and other)*
3. *Interactive (polls, live chats, forums and other)*

Consequently, in order to engage the newest generation of consumers using the social media marketing, businesses must consider the way of presenting the information Generation Z will be interested in.

3) Develop a brand personality

A brand's mentality, message and personality play an extremely important role for Generation Z. Thus, Hurja Media must pay attention to developing an image of a brand that would resonate with the beliefs and values of the newest generation of consumers. As it has also been proven through the several research methods, two of the most important elements of a brand's personality are social responsibility and authenticity. Additionally, as demonstrated through the benchmarking tool, the brands that managed to succeed in engaging with Generation Z have presented themselves with a strong and powerful image that would capture the attention of Z members who are passionate about expressing their personality through the brands they choose (Sensis & ThinkNow Research, 2016) as well as being a part of the greater whole. (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46)

It is also important to mention that it has been noted by the newest generation members during the process of interview research method, the way brands present themselves and the kind of image they create can be a crucial factor influencing the overall attitude towards this business. Thus, Hurja Media must carefully analyse the brand personas of their B2C customers and evaluate how they can potentially benefit, or oppositely, harm the final decision of Generation Z consumer audience.

4) Be innovative

During the period of the most rapid period of innovative developments, it is important to take into consideration the constantly changing and emerging needs and expectations of the newest generation of consumers. As it has already been discussed in the previous chapters of this thesis, some of the latest and most popular innovations implemented by businesses that managed to connect with Generation Z include chatbots, augmented reality, virtual reality and artificial intelligence tools. As a consequence, the commissioning party needs to take into consideration the newest developments in technology and effectively implement them into the social media marketing strategies of their customers as Generation Z with their high expectations due to being surrounded by the world of technology

from their very first days, expects businesses to satisfy their needs and would give an advantage to innovative brands over the others.

Additionally, this development suggestion has also been proven through the research data that provided the author with a variety of responses about favourite social media channels, types and kinds of content as well as other pieces of information that highlighted the amount of possibilities existing on the Internet and the easiness with which the newest generation of consumers perceives new innovative ways of doing things. Consequently, the brands that open towards innovations and constantly implement new effective solutions in their marketing strategies are more likely to capture the attention of Generation Z compared to other companies.

5) Follow trends

Finally, Hurja Media is strongly advised to be aware of the latest trends in the industry of their B2C customer businesses and utilise this knowledge in the creation of the social media marketing strategy of these companies. “Generation We” (Sparks & Honey, 2015, 46) values the community and therefore follows the trends in order to be part of the group and “fit in”. Undoubtedly, this fact opens a great number of possibilities for businesses as, for instance, with the help of popular influencers, they can reach the newest generation of consumers who are very likely to be affected by the choice of their idols and like-minded individuals.

As it has already been discussed in the subchapter 3.4.1 *Current trends*, the social media marketing has undergone a number of transformations and changes in the last years and among some of the most popular current trends include mobile-first, constant connection, short texts, images, videos, live streaming, ephemeral content, social responsibility, ethics and authenticity. As a result, businesses willing to engage with Generation Z must not only be aware of the latest trends in the industry as far as the social media marketing is concerned, but also keep up with the ever-emerging new ones and implement them into their marketing strategies in order to satisfy high expectations of today’s youth.

Undoubtedly, the above-mentioned suggestions that have been developed by the author based on the theoretical framework of this thesis, acquired research data using three methods discussed earlier in this paper as well as the current situation of Hurja Media company, will provide the commissioning party with informative and useful ideas on how to develop effective social media marketing strategies for their B2C customers and greatly benefit the company itself as well.

7.3 Research quality and limitations

To generalise the research conducted in this thesis, as already mentioned, the author based the research findings on the completed strategic analysis, 145 responses received through the online survey as well as the data acquired from three interviews conducted with Generation Z members. This subchapter provides a critical assessment of the research quality and possible limitations that have influenced the overall research outcomes in this thesis.

According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 303-309), there are four main research criteria that evaluate the research quality, as follows: conformability, credibility, dependability and transferability. This subchapter covers these research evaluation elements in the context of the research process conducted in this paper. Additionally, it is important to mention that the ideas discussed in the first part of this subchapter confirm the research criteria mentioned by Eriksson and Kovalainen, whereas the second part of this subchapter objectively evaluates the quality and limitations of the given research as well as discusses improvement suggestions and some possible solutions on how to eliminate the existing restrictions of the research.

Conformability

To start with, a conformability refers to objectivity and neutrality of the findings of a study that are not shaped by the researcher's bias, interest or motivations. (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014, 5746) In application to this thesis, the conformability of the study can be proven through the fact that the objectives mentioned in the beginning of this paper were taken into consideration during the whole process of creating this

work. Therefore, the researcher has examined and evaluated only relevant to this thesis and therefore, objective data. In addition to that, it is also needed to mention that conformability is highlighted throughout the creation and execution of the research methods as well because the questions for both of the research methods were interpreted objectively taking into consideration only the data included in this study. Also, the respondents had a chance to elaborate on their answers and add their own response options in addition to the already-existing ones in the closed-ended questions in the questionnaire as well as the interviews.

Credibility

Secondly, according to Pandey and Patnaik (2014, 5746) a credibility relates to validity and truthfulness of the presented data. This factor can be proven through the amount and quality of data the researcher has gathered from the various scientific literature and online sources in order to make this thesis a reliable source of information. It is important to mention that both of the topics of this paper, Generation Z and social media marketing have been equally studied by the author and taken into consideration during the whole thesis writing process. Additionally, credibility is highlighted through the primary data gathering as well because all the respondents and interviewees were introduced to the topic of the research as well as got acquainted with all the important details in order to provide a reliable and credible data.

Dependability

A dependability enables a research to be consistent in its structure as well as reliable taking into consideration the constantly changing context of the study. (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014, 5746) This thesis has been completed in a logical and structural way and provides readers with a broad overview of the main idea of this research as well as all the important elements of the thesis as well. Thus, the theoretical framework of this thesis is strongly connected with a practical part of this paper and consequently, developing relevant and reliable conclusions. Additionally, the author paid attention to the context and current situation

influencing the research process and implemented all the necessary modifications into it as well.

Transferability

Lastly, a transferability is the way of implementing the given research findings into other contexts. (Pandey & Patnaik, 2014, 5746) As for this thesis, transferability can be proven through several factors. Firstly, the topics chosen for this study are very broad and undoubtedly, can be examined and evaluated from a wide range of perspectives. Secondly, as all the important elements of the given research process were discussed and explained in detail in this paper, it enabled other researchers to be provided with the reliable framework to explore other possibilities of this topic within different contexts. Finally, the author has also proposed a number of ideas for the future research in different settings, which is also an important criterion for transferability.

Although the overall research process went according to the schedule and followed the initial plan, which was developed and thought through beforehand, there were a few limitations that could have possibly affected the overall thesis process. Firstly, two of the core concepts of this thesis, Generation Z and social media marketing, are broad issues that could have been considered from a number of other perspectives instead of only the major ones that are discussed in the theoretical framework of this thesis. Nevertheless, all the concepts discussed in this thesis were relevant to the research as the study as well as beneficial for the use of the commissioning party.

Secondly, some of the terminology used throughout the research process, such as company, brand, marketing and other, could have possibly been difficult to comprehend for Generation Z. However, all the terms were explained beforehand verbally for the interview participants and in the written form for the questionnaire respondents.

The third possible implication that could have influenced the overall research data was the chosen type of research method. Thus, as it has been stated by Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015, 91), the standardised research methods are the best to be used for inexperienced interviewees, and since Generation Z could be related to this definition due to their age, the author chose the methods that have been discussed earlier in this paper, which would provide the respondents with more flexibility in order to receive informative and beneficial data for the research as well as for the commissioning party.

Finally, the scale of the research could be related to a possible limitation as well. Obviously, Generation Z is an extremely wide audience worldwide and due to the limited resources, the research in this thesis (survey and interviews in particular) included a data from only the definite number of Generation Z representatives specifically from Finland. However, it is important to mention that the above-mentioned limitations have not significantly influenced the overall result of this thesis, but undoubtedly could be taken into consideration for the future research.

7.4 Future research suggestions

This subchapter provides some research possibilities that can be utilised by other researchers with the purpose of exploring the topics of social media marketing and Generation Z from different angles and points of view. The author has created a list of suggestions by proposing various research questions as follows:

- How to engage Generation Z using social media marketing from the international perspective?
- How does Generation Z influence other areas of marketing?
- What are the expectations of Generation Z regarding brands?
- How to create a brand personality that would resonate with Generation Z?
- How to engage Generation Z using digital marketing for a B2B company?
- How do trends among the newest generation of consumers influence the overall business performance?

- What are the future trends among Generation Z as far as the social media marketing is concerned?

8 CONCLUDING REMARKS

Finally, it is important to mention that this thesis provided beneficial information for Hurja Media on the topic that they initially were interested in exploring for the improvement of the company's business activities. Thus, the commissioning party was provided with the data that can, undoubtedly, be used in their business and benefit the overall company performance. In addition to that, the author has gained a deep understanding and extensive knowledge of the field of the social media marketing and Generation Z as well. The author has also gained a number of useful skills during the process of completing this thesis such as time management, information search, communication skills and other crucially important qualities that are not only beneficial for the personal growth of the author but also valuable for the future career perspectives.

To conclude, the author of this thesis expresses the gratitude towards all the people who were involved in the process of this research paper. The author would also like to thank a few parties who have significantly contributed to the creation of this thesis. Firstly, South-Eastern Finland University of Applied Sciences that has provided the author with the valuable business-related knowledge that was put into practice during the completion of this writing process. Secondly, Hurja Media as a commissioning party that has not only agreed to collaborate with the author in exploring the topic of this thesis, but also proactively taken part in the process, and shared valuable real-life experience and extensive practical knowledge with the author as well. Finally, the supervisor who provided constructive and informative feedback during the whole process of the creation of this thesis that has significantly contributed to the successful outcome of this thesis.

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SURVEY QUESTIONS IN FINNISH

Kysely Z-sukupolvelle

1. Kuinka vanha sinä olet? (Pakollinen)

2. Mikä on sinun sukupuolesi? (Pakollinen)
 - ☐ Mies
 - ☐ Nainen
 - ☐ Muu
 - ☐ En halua vastata
3. Millainen rooli sosiaalisella medially on elämässäsi? (Pakollinen)
 - ☐ Ei tärkeä
 - ☐ Neutraali
 - ☐ Tärkeä
 - ☐ Erittäin tärkeä
4. Valitse seuraavista sosiaalisen median kanavista ne, joihin olet rekisteröitynyt. (Pakollinen, monivalinta)
 - ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Instagram
 - ☐ Pinterest
 - ☐ Snapchat
 - ☐ Twitch
 - ☐ Twitter
 - ☐ WhatsApp
 - ☐ YouTube
 - ☐ Jodel
 - ☐ YouNow
 - ☐ musical.ly
 - ☐ Muu _____
5. Kuinka usein sinä käytät näitä sosiaalisen median kanavia?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Jodel
- YouNow
- musical.ly
- Muu ____
- Monta kertaa päivässä
- Kerran päivässä
- Muutaman kerran viikossa
- Kerran viikossa
- Muutaman kerran kuukaudessa
- Harvemmin
- En koskaan

6. Mihin sinä käytät näitä sosiaalisen median kanavia? (Monivalinta)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Jodel
- YouNow
- musical.ly
- Muu ____
- Tekstailuun ja keskusteluun
- Uutisten lukemiseen
- Viihdytys tarkoituksessa
- Ostosvinkkejä
- Pelaan pelejä
- Oppimaan uusia asioita
- Seuraan suosikki tuotemerkkejä, julkkiksia, blogaajia jne.
- Koulutehtävien tekemiseen
- Omien elämäntapahtumien jakamiseen
- Muu ____

7. Mikä Internetin aihepiiri on sinusta kiinnostavinta? (1 = vähiten kiinnostava ja 5 = eniten kiinnostava)

- Hauska/viihdyttävä (esim. hauskat kuvat ja videot, meemit, sarjakuvat jne.)
- Inspiroiva (esim. kuvat, tarinat, haastattelut jne.)

- Vakuuttava (esim. mielenkiintoinen tuote / palvelu esittely, ilmaiset kokeilut, arvostelut, tarjoukset, alennukset jne.)
 - Informatiivinen (esim. mielenkiintoinen tuote / palvelu arviointi, ominaisuudet, päivitykset jne.)
 - Interaktiivinen (esim. kyselyt, live-keskustelut, foorumit jne.)
 - Opettavainen (esim. artikkelit, raportit, e-kirjat, infograafiset tiedot, webinaarit, podcastit jne.)
 - Muu ____
8. Mistä aihepiiristä sinä pidät eniten? (1 = vähiten kiinnostava ja 5 = eniten kiinnostava)
- Sosiaalisen median postaukset (ei sisällä kuvia ja videoita)
 - Kuvat
 - Videot
 - Live streaming
 - Artikkelit
 - Podcastit
 - Sähköposti uutiskirjeet
 - Nettisivujen päivitykset
 - Blogi postaukset
 - Webinaarit
 - Muu ____
9. Ketä seuraat sosiaalisessa mediassa eniten? (1 = seuraan vähemmän ja 5 = seuraan enemmän)
- Ystäviä
 - Perhettä
 - Brändejä
 - Julkkiksia
 - Internet vaikuttajia (blogaajat, vlogaajat)
 - Muu ____
10. Brändit joista pidät ovat... (Monivalinta)
- Suosittuja kaveriesi keskuudessa

- Ympäristöystävällisiä ja sosiaalisesti vastuullisia
- Sinun suosikki julkkiksen, blogaajan yms. Suosittelema
- Budjetille sopiva
- Laadukkaita tuotteita/palveluita
- Ystäväsi tai perheenjäsenesi suosittelema
- Sinun arvoja tukevia (esim. eivät tue syrjintää, ovat tasa-arvoisia jne.)
- Sinun persoonallisuuttasi kuvastavat

11. Kuinka tärkeitä sinulle ovat seuraavat asiat?

- Yhteisö (esim. olla osana ryhmää, olla yhteyksissä ihmisten kanssa, jotka ajattelevat samalla tavalla sinun kanssasi jne.)
- Innovaatio (esim. uusi teknologia, innovatiiviset ratkaisut jne.)
- Nopeus (esim. nopea Internet yhteys, pika palvelut jne.)
- Kestävä kehitys (esim. sosiaaliset sekä ympäristö asiat)
- Aitous (esim. olla aito ja ainutlaatuinen)
- Monimuotoisuus (esim. sukupuoli, etnisyys, rotu, sosioekonominen asema, uskonto, seksuaalinen suuntautuminen jne.)
- Vapaus (esim. olla oma itsesi, sosiaalinen vapaus, taloudellinen vapaus, maantieteellinen vapaus jne.)

12. Anna esimerkkinä sinulle yksi mieleinen brändi.

13. Miksi se on sinun suosikkisi?

SURVEY QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH

Generation Z survey

1. How old are you? (Required)

2. What is your gender? (Required)
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Other
 - ☐ No answer
3. What is the role of social media in your life? (Required)
 - ☐ Not important
 - ☐ Neutral
 - ☐ Important
 - ☐ Very important
4. Please select social media platforms on which you are registered.
(Required, multiple choice)
 - ☐ Facebook
 - ☐ Instagram
 - ☐ Pinterest
 - ☐ Snapchat
 - ☐ Twitch
 - ☐ Twitter
 - ☐ WhatsApp
 - ☐ YouTube
 - ☐ Jodel
 - ☐ YouNow
 - ☐ musical.ly
 - ☐ Other _____
5. How often do you use these social media platforms?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Jodel
- YouNow
- musical.ly
- Other ____
- Multiple times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- A few times a month
- Less than the choices given
- Never

6. What do you use these social media platforms for? (Multiple choice)

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- Twitch
- Twitter
- WhatsApp
- YouTube
- Jodel
- YouNow
- musical.ly
- Other ____
- Texting and chatting
- Catching up on the news
- Entertainment purposes
- Shopping recommendations
- Playing games
- Learning new things
- Following favourite brands, celebrities, bloggers etc.
- Doing schoolwork
- Sharing own life updates

7. What kind of content do you find the most interesting? (1 = least interesting and 5 = most interesting)

- Entertaining (e.g. funny images and videos, memes, comics etc.)
- Inspiring (e.g. pictures, stories, interviews etc.)
- Convincing (e.g. interesting product/service demos, free trials, ratings, deals, offers, discounts etc.)
- Informative (e.g. interesting product/service reviews, features, updates etc.)

- Interactive (e.g. polls, live chats, forums etc.)
 - Educational (e.g. articles, reports, e-books, infographics, webinars, podcasts etc.)
 - Other ____
8. What type of content do you like the most? (1 = least favourite and 5 = most favourite)
- Social media posts (excluding images and videos)
 - Images
 - Videos
 - Live streaming
 - Articles
 - Podcasts
 - Email newsletters
 - Website updates
 - Blog posts
 - Webinars
 - Other ____
9. Who do you prefer following on social media the most? (1 = least preferable and 5 = most preferable)
- Friends
 - Family
 - Brands
 - Celebrities
 - Online influencers (bloggers, vloggers etc.)
 - Other ____
10. The brands you like are... (Multiple choice)
- Popular among your peers
 - Eco-friendly and socially responsible
 - Recommended by your favourite celebrity, blogger etc.
 - Budget-friendly
 - Producing good quality products/services
 - Recommended by your friend or family member

- Aligning with your beliefs
- Showing off your personality

11. How important to you are the following issues?

- Community (e.g. being part of a group, connecting with like-minded people etc.)
- Innovation (e.g. new technology, innovative solutions etc.)
- Speed (e.g. fast internet connection, instant services etc.)
- Sustainability (e.g. social and environmental issues)
- Authenticity (e.g. being real and unique)
- Diversity (e.g. gender, ethnicity, race, socioeconomic status, religion, sexual orientation etc.)
- Freedom (e.g. being yourself, social freedom, financial freedom, geographical freedom etc.)

12. Please give an example of one of your favourite brands.

13. Why is it your favourite?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN FINNISH

1. Millainen rooli sosiaalisella medially on elämässäsi?
2. Milloin yleensä käytät sosiaalista mediaa?
3. Missä yleensä käytät sosiaalista mediaa?
4. Mitkä sosiaalisen median kanavista ovat sinulle mieleisimmät? Miksi?
5. Mihin sinä käytät näitä sosiaalisia medioita?
6. Mikä Internetin sisältö on sinusta kiinnostavinta?
7. Ketä yleensä seuraat sosiaalisessa mediassa?
8. Mitkä ovat sinun lempibrändejäsi?
9. Mitkä ovat tärkeimmät kriteerisi brändin valinnassa, kun haluat ostaa jotakin?
10. Missä sosiaalisessa mediassa sinun mielestäsi brändiä pitäisi esitellä?
11. Jos sinun pitäisi etsiä tietoa SF Studios-firmasta, mistä sinä etsisit? (testi)
12. Käy SF Studios-firman jokaisella sosiaalisen median kanavalla (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter) ja kerro sen jälkeen:
 - Mikä oli ensivaikutelmasi?
 - Millaista nettikäyttäytymistä siellä havaitsit?
 - Mikä on kokonaisarviosi kanavasta?
- (testi)
13. Mitä tiedät SF Studios-yrityksestä sen jälkeen, kun olet käynyt tutustumassa sen käyttämiin sosiaalisen median kanaviin? (testi)
14. Vaikuttaako sinun mielipiteeseesi jostakin yrityksestä se, millainen kuva tästä yrityksestä annetaan sosiaalisessa mediassa?

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS IN ENGLISH

1. What is the role of social media in your life?
2. When do you usually use social media?
3. Where do you usually use social media?
4. What are your favourite social media platforms? Why?
5. What do you use these social media platforms for?
6. What kind of online content do you find the most interesting?
7. Who do you mostly like following on social media?
8. What are your favourite brands?
9. What are the important criteria for choosing a brand when making a purchase?
10. What social media platforms do you expect a brand to have a presence on?
11. If you had to find out information about SF Studios company, where would you look? (test)
12. Please have a look at each social media platform of SF Studios (Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Twitter) and reflect on the following:
 - first impression
 - online behaviour
 - overall opinion(test)
13. After looking at SF Studios social media channels, what have you learnt about this company? (test)
14. Does the brand image of a company on social media influence your overall attitude towards it?

ENGAGING GENERATION Z THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING E-BOOKLET

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